

EXHIBIT 244

PART 2 OF 2

Qaeda's ideology and suicide operations in the West. Nevertheless, they did not let these differences get in the way of their friendships, and they never discussed jihad in front of Dixon at Omar's request.⁵⁷

Omar's support for suicide bombings surfaced in an altercation he had with the imam of the Finchley Mosque. In early 2005, the imam condemned suicide bombings at a Friday sermon after the news of a suicide bombing in Palestine. Omar waited for the imam afterward and, when he passed by, shouted, "Don't mislead the people!" The imam just continued to walk without answering. A week later, Omar apologized: "Imam, it was very inappropriate of me, and I'm very sorry about that. Please, forgive me."⁵⁸

By mid-March, Bexhill failed his exams and was suspended for not paying his tuition.⁵⁹ He immediately enrolled at another school. This was his pattern: he enrolled in courses, paid the first slice of tuition and then stopped paying, dropped out, and enrolled in another course elsewhere to maintain his visa status and parental financial support.

Ibrahim's Return

Ibrahim returned to England on 12 March 2005 but avoided his flat for fear of getting arrested for skipping his court appearance and moved in with Siraj Ali, a floor above Omar's flat.⁶⁰ As a result, Ibrahim was constantly with Omar. One day, they went to visit Yahya, where Bexhill was very surprised to see Ibrahim alive as he had expected him to die in Pakistan or Iraq. Ibrahim was going to tell Bexhill about his adventures but Omar signaled to him not to say anything. Bexhill asked Ibrahim about Shakeel and Majid but got no answer. Yahya later told him that the missing men had been killed. This was the last time Bexhill saw Ibrahim.⁶¹

Bexhill was no longer a trusted member of the group. Ibrahim no longer came to Yahya's flat. Bexhill was no longer invited to come to Omar's flat despite the fact that Yahya spent much of his time there. Within two weeks, Yahya got rid of him. Yahya reproached him for having been in his bedroom to watch a jihadi DVD on his DVD player. Bexhill protested that he paid rent and could do what he liked, but he later apologized. Yahya then told Bexhill that he was going to store large boxes in his room and someone else would come and share his room, and finally that he was going to raise his rent. Although Bexhill later made a few phone calls to his former friends, he never saw them again.⁶²

The telephone records show that Ibrahim and Omar reconnected briefly with Hamdi. Ibrahim and Omar lived at Curtis House in North London while Hamdi lived in South London, almost an hour away. At the beginning of April 2005, they frequently called each other and were collocated in the same place.⁶³ After hearing the evidence, the judge at the trial concluded, "Mohamed and Osman [Hamdi], I have no doubt, became involved soon after Ibrahim returned from Pakistan. The telephone records provide a compelling picture in this regard and I reject the contradictory evidence I heard from some of the defendants as regards supposed visits to a community centre or restaurants that were by coincidence close to Osman's home. It is my finding that those visits to Osman's home and those telephone calls were all part of their early involvement in this conspiracy."⁶⁴

I do not share the judge's conviction. After a short flurry of calls and three meetings between Ibrahim, Omar, and Hamdi in early April and two more between Omar and Hamdi later in the month, there was absolutely no communication between Hamdi and Omar or Ibrahim for two and a half months. This communication silence is simply not how amateur conspiracies evolve. They simply do not have the discipline to maintain this silence for such a long period. Contrast this silence with the frequent communication between the four conspirators living in North London. In the six weeks between the end of March and early May 2005, Ibrahim, Omar, and Ishmail lived in the same Curtis building while Yahya was not far away. Their phone records show very frequent communications between them: 85 calls between Ibrahim and Omar, 103 calls between Ibrahim and Yahya, 171 calls between Omar and Yahya (522 calls for the longer period between 10 November 2004 and 11 June 2005), 88 calls between Omar and Ishmail, and only 21 calls between Ibrahim and Ishmail. This shows very poor communication security and discipline among the conspirators, and establishes Omar and Yahya as the main link between the two pairs of conspirators—exchanging almost four calls a day—and the fact that Ibrahim was not a close friend of Ishmail. Hamdi and Mohamed were in contact with each other 93 times between February and July 2005 and were in the vicinity of each other's flat for half of the days in the six months prior to the attacks. In contrast, there were only 30 calls between Omar and Hamdi clustered around the beginning and the end of April.⁶⁵ Furthermore, Hamdi never visited Omar's flat until four days prior to the attack in July. This pattern is more consistent with Ibrahim reconnecting with Hamdi and telling him about his experience in Pakistan, and then

Hamdi's positive reaction to his adventures but no involvement on the part of Hamdi's in Ibrahim's and Omar's activities until mid-July.

While we are on the telephone records, there is a puzzling series of calls starting on 6 May between Ibrahim's cell phone and four cell phones registered to Abdulla Ahmed Ali and Ali's family. Although Ibrahim became friendly with Ali when they were in prison together, he denied he had ever met or known Ali before his arrest. He claimed he did not remember the calls but explained that someone from Walthamstow had probably tried to call him to inquire about Rizwan Majid's disappearance. Although this explanation is plausible, the calls occurred about two months after Ibrahim's return, when Majid's family had already been notified of his death and, since Ibrahim had been to Majid's house at least once before their trip, the family could have chosen someone at least acquainted with Ibrahim, such as Hamid, rather than rely on a complete stranger to Ibrahim at the time. I suspect that the calls might be something else altogether. In his report, Rashid Rauf wrote that he lost contact with Ibrahim after Ibrahim's return to London. To reestablish contact, Rauf tried to contact Ibrahim by a messenger.⁶⁶ Since Ali was in contact with Rauf at the time, as we shall see in the next chapter, it is more probable that Ali was Rauf's messenger, urging Ibrahim to resume contact with his al Qaeda intermediary.

Buying Hydrogen Peroxide

At his trial, Ibrahim testified that, after his return, he saw on the Internet a letter from an Iraqi woman, who was raped several times by her captors in Abu Ghraib Prison, and this outraged him so much that he was determined to carry his scheme of a fake explosion to protest British participation in that war.⁶⁷ Omar confirmed this during his testimony. I share the jury's and judge's skepticism about this account of a hoax to protest the war.

After lying low for a few weeks, Ibrahim and Omar proceeded with the most crucial step in their plot, the buying and concentrating of the hydrogen peroxide. Ibrahim searched for other uses of hydrogen peroxide on the Internet and found out that it could be used for bleaching wood and wall-paper stripping. Omar's roommate, Ishmail, was an ideal buyer for this product because he was a painter and decorator in the construction business. Omar told him that he was getting married and needed to decorate his flat and strip the wallpaper there. Ibrahim showed him a printout downloaded from the Internet detailing its use for paint stripping and displaying

a picture of workingmen in protective overalls and masks. Ibrahim gave Ishmail money to buy a big bottle at a pharmacy. For such a large quantity, the pharmacist directed Ishmail to a beauty supply shop. He bought a liter of 18 percent hydrogen peroxide for £2.98 on 27 April at Sally's, a hair and beauty shop in Finchley. He called Omar to tell him he had bought it but Omar was upset: "Why are you telling me on the phone? Why can't you bring it to the house?" The next day, at Maplin's, Ibrahim bought bomb components such as small bulbs, lamp holders, electric holders, electric components, transistors, small batteries, bell wire, and a light switch.⁶⁸

On the evening of 7 May, Ishmail was cautioned for smoking marijuana in the park where he played soccer and basketball. When he got back to Omar's flat, Ibrahim asked him to buy more hydrogen peroxide. Ishmail returned to Sally's and bought their entire stock of 14 liters for £13.82 on 9 May and asked the store to order some more.⁶⁹ Now that Ibrahim and Omar were ready to concentrate the hydrogen peroxide, they chose to do it in Omar's flat, converting it to a bomb factory. But first, Omar needed to get rid of his tenants and he told them that he wanted them to leave because he was about to redecorate his flat since he was getting married. At trial, Ishmail testified that he was ready to leave because he felt they were disrespectful to him by constantly calling him "African man." Ishmail told them they were also African but they replied that they were half Arab and half African, but Ishmail was the real African.⁷⁰

However, Ishmail later pleaded guilty and admitted that he had agreed "to take part in making bombs by buying the hydrogen peroxide; he was reluctant but did as asked; he appreciated that any explosion of the bombs would be likely to endanger life."⁷¹ His Indian roommate was probably not aware of the plot. They moved into a small flat in the neighborhood, on Ballards Lane. The Indian Muslim took his computer with him: it had been the only computer in the flat.

Concentrating Hydrogen Peroxide and Buying Some More

As soon as the tenants were out, Ibrahim started concentrating the hydrogen peroxide. He first used a saucepan but this process took too long and he switched to a pot to boil down the chemical four liters at a time. To protect himself from the toxic steam, he wore goggles, opened the window of the kitchen, and closed its door. He calculated the specific gravity and concentration of his solution with a set of Salter electronic scales. It took

about two and a half to three hours to boil the original four liters down to about 400 milliliters of estimated 70 percent hydrogen peroxide, a ten-to-one ratio. He found the weighing of the solution along the way too laborious and simply assumed that the resulting solution was a 70 percent concentration. He bought a plastic measuring jug to measure 400 milliliters and stopped checking the specific gravity of his final product. For storage, he poured the concentrated product back into the original empty hydrogen peroxide bottles, which he carefully marked with the number "70."⁷²

The forensic experts at trial agreed that concentrating hydrogen peroxide is a tricky business because heating it too fast breaks it down into water and oxygen. Through experimentation, they found that heating the hydrogen peroxide at 60 degrees centigrade was the optimal temperature to prevent this breakdown, but the duration of this process took much longer than a few hours to reach the target of 70 percent. Duplicating Ibrahim's method, they obtained a mixture of only 58 percent.⁷³ Ibrahim's faulty manufacture process resulted in the failure of main charge to detonate at this weak concentration of hydrogen peroxide.

Ibrahim also manufactured TATP, the main ingredient of the detonator. For this he bought a small bottle of 24.5 percent hydrogen peroxide and acetone, the main component of nail varnish remover, at a pharmacy. To catalyze this reaction, he bought sulfuric acid from a B&Q chain store. He described the process at trial, "First, you put the hydrogen peroxide and then you put the acetone, bit by bit, and mixing at the same time . . . [then] put it in the fridge . . . to cool it before you put the acid because the acid makes it hot." Using a tea bag, he filtered the resulting crystals, rinsed them with tap water and stored the crystals in a mouthwash bottle.⁷⁴ Forensic experts at the trial testified that the recovered sample of TATP was 90 percent pure.

To make tens of liters of concentrated solution, Ibrahim needed a lot more hydrogen peroxide. Omar called Ishmail, who was now living on his own and more reluctant to do favors for his former landlord. Omar insisted and Ishmail reluctantly agreed. He ordered more hydrogen peroxide from the nearby shop. Omar said he should also buy some from Hairways in Tottenham. Ishmail protested that this was too far and he did not have a car. Omar suggested he call Dixon to help him. Ishmail called Dixon, who agreed to help in principle. On 18 May, Omar and Dixon drove to his flat, but Ishmail told them he was just too tired after a long day's work. He felt that Omar was abusing their friendship with these demands. Ishmail later

testified that Omar told him, "Stop, don't talk. Don't give me long stories. . . . It's only once. If you don't get this opportunity, that's it." Ishmail agreed to do it the next day and meet Dixon at Omar's flat. Omar and Dixon were upset to have wasted their time.⁷⁵

The above paragraph reflects Ishmail's version in court. Right after the prosecution's evidence and Ibrahim's direct testimony, Ishmail turned on his fellow co-defendants, arguing that at first he did not know what the hydrogen peroxide was for, and when he found out, he was very reluctant to participate in Ibrahim's and Omar's schemes. As a result, his version was not challenged by prosecution evidence or Ibrahim's examination. Omar, who testified later, insisted that Ishmail knew from the very beginning that they would use the peroxide for a "hoax" bombing. "[He] got involved since he was staying with me, me and him would talk about everything, whatever I was doing I would talk to him and Ibrahim was talking to him and was telling him that . . . we're going to demonstrate about Iraq and what's happened, the oppression there and . . . he was keen to help."⁷⁶ On cross-examination, Omar insisted that Ishmail never complained about buying the hydrogen peroxide.⁷⁷ It appears that both are stretching the truth. Ishmail later admitted knowing about the bomb making and not a hoax, as Omar claimed.

On 19 May in the afternoon, Dixon and Ishmail drove to Hairways. The salesperson later remembered that Ishmail asked her for 70 percent hydrogen peroxide.

I explained that peroxide, some people refer to it as 18 percent, but 18 percent is also sometimes called 60 volume . . . thinking he meant 70 volume. . . . I remember him insisting that it was 70 percent, not 70 volume. . . . I explained . . . the highest we are able to get is 18 percent peroxide. He then asked for something like 48 gallons of . . . 18 percent liquid peroxide and we don't have anywhere near them sort of quantities in stock at all. . . . It was at this point I felt I needed to pass the request to my manager . . . because I did not really know what to do in that situation, ordering such a large quantity of stuff we wouldn't be able to sell. I wasn't sure if we needed to take a deposit or anything, so I passed it on to her.⁷⁸

Ishmail and Dixon ended up buying all the stock in the store,⁷⁹ namely 12 one-liter bottles and one four-liter bottle of 18 percent hydrogen peroxide

for just under £35 in cash. At trial, neither Ishmail nor Ibrahim had any explanation for Ishmail's request for 70 percent concentrated hydrogen peroxide.

From Dixon's recollection, at Hairways, "the man on the counter did express a concern that the stuff was quite volatile and said to be careful. Ishmail said, 'There's no worries. I'm a professional, I know what I'm doing.' . . . When the lady asked . . . what the bleach was for, Ishmail seemed a bit reluctant to answer and so I answered and just said it was for stripping walls. She was quite surprised. . . . I just assumed she was getting concerned because she hadn't heard of it being used in that process. . . . When we got into the car, Ishmail said that they didn't have enough at that address and he needed to get some more and he knew another hair place in Finchley." They drove to Sally's to buy 18 more one-liter bottles for £17.77. They then drove back to Curtis House, where Dixon helped Ishmail take them into Omar's flat. "Ishmail dropped one bottle," Dixon recalled. "It rolled off the top of the box. The container split and a man picked it up for him. Ishmail said, 'Be careful with that,' and took it off him."⁸⁰ Ishmail gave Dixon £5 for gas and his trouble.⁸¹

A few days later, Omar called Ishmail for more hydrogen peroxide and Ishmail ordered some more from Sally's. On 1 June, he and Omar picked up 42 one-liter bottles from Sally's and paid £48.86 in cash. They ordered another batch of 42 liters from the store, but the store clerk transposed the digits by mistakes and ordered only 24 liters. Omar wanted to take a taxicab back to the flat, but Ishmail suggested that they take a bus that stopped at the corner and went directly to the Curtis House, which is what they did.⁸²

During that period, Yahya was studying for his year-end exams and was planning to fly to Yemen to see his wife and then go with her to Ethiopia for a vacation. He came to Omar's flat at least every other day according to the telephone geolocation records.⁸³ Ibrahim and Omar tried to shield their friend by testifying that he was not aware of their concentrating hydrogen peroxide as they stopped doing it before he would come over. However, Ishmail testified that there was a strong smell from the cooking process in the flat even when it was not going on.

In fact, Yahya was involved in the peroxide buying spree. Around 20 May, he inquired about hydrogen peroxide at PAK Cosmetics Centre in Finsbury Park. The salesperson remembered, "[Yahya] asked me for peroxide and he asked me . . . for . . . the maximum percentage we can get in and . . . I told him I would contact our suppliers. . . . At a later stage, I

asked him [why he wanted strong peroxide] and he said they are carpenters and they use it for washing some wood and stuff." Yahya told him he wanted to buy in large quantity. The salesperson gave Yahya his business card. Yahya returned a week or two later and the salesperson said that the most he could get was 18 percent. Yahya said at first he was interested in about 50 liters, but asked whether he could get a larger discount for 100 liters. The salesperson told him he was not sure if he could get this large quantity from his supplier and said he would check the prices at that quantity. Yahya told him his name was Yousef and gave him Ishmail's phone number. The salesperson called Ishmail on 8 June and asked for Yousef. Ishmail seemed confused and when the salesperson told him it was about a hydrogen peroxide order, Ishmail said he was Yousef's friend and the salesperson asked him to tell Yousef to call back and place an order.⁸⁴

At the trial, Yahya claimed he did not know what the hydrogen peroxide was for and confessed he might have been a bit naïve about his friends' using him. The prosecutor refuted his air of innocent naïveté by showing that Yahya got the money for his trip to Yemen by defrauding his university and getting financial aid by claiming that he was disabled, had no water and electricity at his home, and had to borrow money from friends to survive. He submitted false documents in support of his application, including a falsified bank statement. In fact, he was living on benefits and withdrew £2,800 from his bank account on 20 May and repaid his sister £1,500 for the dowry money she had loaned him the previous year. His university paid him £532 in June.⁸⁵

Yahya asked Ishmail to help get him a cheap return ticket to Yemen. Ishmail got him one for £467 and Yahya gave £50 to Ishmail for his troubles on 10 June.⁸⁶ On 11 June, Yahya flew to Yemen to meet his wife and together they flew to Ethiopia on 18 July.

The Final Push on the Bomb Making

On 14 June, a fire burned Ishmail's flat and he and his roommate lost all their possessions. The police sheltered Ishmail at a bed-and-breakfast for a night. He spent the next two nights hanging out at a Turkish shop until it closed and slept on a bench in a park. The Finchley Mosque imam made an announcement about his predicament at services. Omar, who was there, invited Ishmail to move back with him rent free, which Ishmail did on 17 June.⁸⁷

At trial, Ishmail testified that he was rarely in the flat after his return but his cell phone records contradict him. Omar and Ibrahim again asked him to buy more hydrogen peroxide. Ishmail claimed he did not ask any questions and complied because he felt obligated to return the favor for his rent-free living. Ibrahim was also planning to buy a van—he and Ishmail leafed through a catalogue of minivans, looking at their prices—and was scheduled to take his test for a driver's license that June.⁸⁸

On 18 June, Ishmail and Ibrahim went to PAK Cosmetics to follow up on Yahya's inquiry. They told the salesman they were friends of Yousef, who was busy at work. He told them that he could give them a trade price for a four-liter bottle of hydrogen peroxide of £5.40 a bottle in large quantity, but he needed a 50 percent deposit before he put in an order. Ishmail, who did most of the talking, said they would come back with it. On 21 June, Omar and Ishmail went to Sally's to pick up his order but found out that the clerk had ordered only 24 one-liter bottles. They bought them for a little less than £28 pounds and placed an additional order for 120 liters. Later that day, Ishmail and Ibrahim returned to PAK Cosmetics and asked what kind of discount they could get for 200 liters. The salesman quoted them a final price of £5.20 a bottle. They placed an order for 200 liters and gave him a £100 deposit. The salesman asked them how they were going to use this much peroxide and they told him they would use it to wash wood and break it down into smaller bottles to supply some pharmacies. He promised to contact them as soon as he got delivery and placed the order with his supplier the next day. On 30 June, Ibrahim and Ishmail picked up from Sally's 120 one-liter bottles for £139.59 in Abdu Ali's Volkswagen. On 5 July, they picked up from PAK Cosmetics 52 four-liter bottles (totaling 208 liters) for an additional £170. The CCTV footage from the store showed them to be all smiles as they stood at the counter paying for their purchase.⁸⁹

This last frenzy of purchases raised the total amount of 18 percent hydrogen peroxide for this plot to 443 liters, with one liter spilled during transportation. This was an enormous amount of concentrated hydrogen peroxide. To put it in perspective, their 219 liters from Sally's, a nationwide chain store, amounted to 41 percent of its total national sales that year and this was less than half of what the conspirators bought in total.⁹⁰

Where did the money for these purchases come from? They totaled £557 for the hydrogen peroxide alone. The trial left this mystery unsolved. Ibrahim testified that he funded these purchases by himself. He claimed that he returned from Pakistan with about £700 and did not have any

expenses since he was living with friends.⁹¹ Prosecutors did not press him on this issue, but he did not lack for money during the duration of the plot and was even talking about buying a van. He might have received some money from Yahya, who withdrew a very large amount of unaccounted-for money in May, or Rashid Rauf might have given him money.

As soon as Ibrahim, Omar, and Ishmail got their two large deliveries, they started concentrating the hydrogen peroxide 18 hours a day. A two-week rotation schedule was later found at 58 Curtis House showing Ishmail taking the shift from 5 AM to 11 AM, Omar from 11 AM to 5 PM, and Ibrahim from 5 PM to 11 PM. This amounted to 252 hours. Using Ibrahim's calculation that it took him about two and half to three hours to concentrate four liters of 18 percent hydrogen peroxide to 70 percent, they could have easily have concentrated their last purchases of 328 liters during this period. The first half of July was a period of intense activity as reflected in Omar's higher electric bill.⁹² In the end, the conspirators filled 38 one-liter bottles labeled "70."

In his defense statement, Ibrahim suggested that he had used only the oldest bottle of peroxide but the peroxide bought from PAK Cosmetics contained a high level of tin impurity, which was recovered in the main charges of the bombs. This indicates that he had used the last batch of peroxide. At trial, he also claimed that his original plan was to leave six to eight rucksacks unattended looking like real bombs (that is, with a real main charge make up of 70 percent hydrogen peroxide, but without a battery) to protest the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁹³ As three liters of concentrated hydrogen peroxide are required for each fake bomb, this amounts only to 18 to 24 liters of concentrated liquid. Given the trouble they went to in order to concentrate hydrogen peroxide, it is surprising that they overshot the maximum required by so much by making 38 liters. This does not make sense.

I do not believe that Ibrahim originally wanted to carry out suicide attacks. He testified at his trial that he was going to leave the bombs at some site, unattended. This was quite different from what Rauf expected since he had made Ibrahim record a martyrdom video in Islamabad, so I wonder whether Ibrahim's break in communication with Rauf was due to the fact that he had decided not to carry out a suicide attack. But this still leaves the problem of the large quantity of concentrated hydrogen peroxide unresolved. The mention of a minivan that Ibrahim was shopping for in June is intriguing. I wonder whether Ibrahim planned to build a minivan

bomb, which he intended to fill in with about 150 pounds of explosive material.

The hypothesis of a minivan bomb may also explain the puzzle of Yahya's disappearance from the plot, Ishmail's ambiguous status in it, and the absence of Hamdi and Mohamed from it for a long time. Up to that point, the plot actively involved only Ibrahim and Omar in all its phases. They could manufacture the larger bomb by themselves, but needed large quantities of concentrated hydrogen peroxide without triggering undue suspicion. They asked their friends, Yahya and Ishmail, to help in the purchase of a large quantity of it. Yahya, a radical like them, was a willing participant, but was no longer needed after the purchases if the plot was a minivan bomb. He could therefore go to see his wife in Yemen. I cannot imagine him abandoning his friends had he been needed to participate in coordinated suicide bombings. Ishmail was not a radical, but he had the perfect cover story of being a painter and decorator with his trade card to make the purchases. He was clearly doing a favor for his friends, and after buying the chemicals did not expect to be part of the plot. The fire at his flat and the necessity of moving back with Omar pulled him back into the plot, and his phone put him at the flat when the concentrating was taking place. By that time, Ishmail certainly knew that the large amount of concentrated hydrogen peroxide was for a bomb. He is not as naïve and stupid as he claimed to be at trial. At trial Ibrahim had tried to cover for him in his direct examination, which gave Ishmail an opportunity to change strategy when his turn to testify came and distance himself from his former comrades.

Hamdi and Mohamed were as radical, if not more so, as Ibrahim and Omar, but were not needed at all for a minivan bomb plot and were not part of it. The minivan bomb hypothesis makes far more sense than the hoax bomb excuse the defendants used at trial and ties up loose ends that are otherwise difficult to explain. Nevertheless, Omar and Ibrahim could not reveal this plan in their own defense because attempting to carry out a minivan bomb in the middle of London is just as bad as trying to carry out simultaneous suicide bombings in that city.

Last-Minute Change of Plans

By early July, Mohammed Hamid and his wife returned from their trip. He resumed his Friday evening gatherings at his house and organized a paintball game in Kent attended by Mohamed and Hamdi on 3 July.⁹⁴

The London bombings of 7 July 2005 took everyone by surprise. Hamid received a call from a friend advising him not to set up his dawah table at Marble Arch as usual. Hamid ignored it. "Everyone was grumpy," he later recalled, "angry and the majority of them throwing racial abuse at me, shouting at me, 'You're a terrorist, you're this, you're that,' all the names under the sun, some people were spitting. . . . I said, 'Listen, how can you blame me? I'm here. I'm standing here. I haven't done anything wrong. Why are you blaming me?' . . . One of the officers . . . says to me, 'I advise you to go today.' . . . So, I say, 'I think you're right, I am packing up.'" Hamid left for home and thought about Muslims in Britain. "They're going to be scared of a backlash. . . . They're frightened of being arrested. They're frightened of racial attacks, they're frightened of abuse."⁹⁵ He texted a message to his friends: "Assalam bro, we fear no one except Allah. We will not change our ways. We are proud to be a Muslim and we will not hide. 8.00 pm Friday at my place, be there, food and talk. Al-Quran." The next evening, he held the Friday evening gathering, to which Hamdi, Mohamed, and Phil Rees of the BBC came.⁹⁶

Ibrahim probably had not known about the London bombings beforehand. Rauf may have given him a general direction to conduct a set of bombings during the summer, which may explain the rush to make bombs in early July. Both Ibrahim and Omar testified that the London bombings changed their plans. Ibrahim noted that despite the horrors of the London bombings, "it got Britain and the politicians talking about their role in Iraq. . . . My aim is to cause maximum disruption and . . . maximum publicity and then get maximum debate about the war in Iraq, so I thought I told Omar this is the right time to put pressure on the government by making a fake suicide mission, but . . . obviously without killing innocent people."⁹⁷ Omar's testimony backed Ibrahim: "It changed the first idea of unattended [devices] and we thought if we could do the same thing, a copy-cat, fake suicide mission, we could attract a lot of media attention and this in turn was the right time to put pressure on the government. . . . We thought, if we could do this demonstration, this will make it clear how people are against this illegal war and how the people of this country, the majority of them, do not agree with this war, and we hope that the government would change its foreign policy and stop throwing bombs in Iraq. . . . Whether innocent people die here or Iraq, it's still innocent people so our aim was to stop anything happening in Iraq."⁹⁸ Ishmail may have been privy to these discussions because his phone record shows that he was at Curtis House daily from 10 to 16 July.⁹⁹

The problem with the above tirade is that it is just wishful thinking because right after the London bombings, people rallied round Blair's government and refused to be intimidated by terrorists. The issue of Iraq was not debated to any significant extent and instead there was an overwhelming condemnation of the bombings by all the people, including Muslims and their leaders. This is not consistent with both defendants' justification for their copycat attempt.

Ibrahim and Omar testified that their original plan was to leave unattended fully operational bombs, for realism's sake, but without a battery to ignite their detonation. In view of the London bombings, their new plan now called for ignition of the detonator for the sake of an effect but without exploding the main charge. Ibrahim and Omar testified that in order to make sure that the make-believe charges would not explode, Ibrahim diluted the 70 percent concentrated hydrogen peroxide by mixing it with an equal volume of tap water to reduce it to 35 percent concentration.¹⁰⁰ The prosecution refuted this claim of dilution with testimony about differing isotope profiles.¹⁰¹ After the trial, it was found that prosecutors knew this testimony to be false when they introduced it at trial.¹⁰² In any case, this testimony was not really needed because it was clear that the hydrogen peroxide had been diluted not by Ibrahim's intent but by his incompetence.

Like the jury and judge, I reject the defendants' claim that they were planning a hoax bombing. The London bombings had indeed changed their plans. These suicide bombings raised the bar for terrorist attacks in the West. The London bombers had now become the prototype for global neojihadis. Their behavior became the new norm. Suicide bombers replaced simple bombers as the new heroes. Now, an unattended car bomb was simply not good enough for an attack. It had to be a suicide bombing to catch the imagination of other potential neojihadi fighters. Omar and Ibrahim simply decided to duplicate the exploits of their dead comrades.

Omar and Ibrahim claimed that they then tested a full bomb with the main charge mixture of diluted 35 percent hydrogen peroxide at Omar's flat around 14 July to ensure that it would not explode. They claimed that they knew that the small amount of TATP was not powerful enough to detonate this weak explosive mixture. According to them, Ibrahim mixed the diluted hydrogen peroxide with chapati flour in a 6.25-liter plastic bucket and inserted a detonator in it. The TATP detonator was ignited by

a small electric bulb filled with TATP when connected to a battery. As expected, the detonator made a popping sound and the main charge did not explode.¹⁰³ Omar said that he wiped out the mess with a T-shirt and flushed it down the toilet. This rag with main charge residue was later found at Omar's flat. I am skeptical of this account, and Ishmail, as we shall see, had a different explanation for this rag.

Bringing Hamdi and Mohamed into the Plot

Now that Omar and Ibrahim planned to conduct a copycat attack, they needed at least two more people to copy the London bombings. Omar immediately suggested Hamdi. "Osman [Hamdi] was always against the war in Iraq. . . . Osman's the kind of person who will do demonstrations." They met him at a park in the vicinity of his home late on 14 July. Ibrahim gave him a political pitch, saying that demonstrations against the war had not worked and more had to be done. Hamdi agreed to participate and volunteered his friend Mohamed, who was just as worked up about Iraq as Ibrahim and Omar. Hamdi would speak to his friend.¹⁰⁴

The next evening, Ibrahim and Omar met again with Hamdi at the park. Hamdi had earlier gone to Hamid's Friday evening gathering.¹⁰⁵ Mohamed was working in Reading and got back to London very late when Hamdi called him. He met Ibrahim, Omar, and Hamdi, who explained the deal to him, and Mohamed agreed to take part in it. Omar and Ibrahim invited their two new partners to come to Omar's flat to talk some more and see parts of the bombs. They drove to the flat in Mohamed's car and arrived early in the morning.¹⁰⁶

At Omar's flat, they talked about their plans. Ibrahim demonstrated how a little TATP flashed in a teaspoon. They agreed to imitate the London bombers with the use of rucksack bombs. They decided to initiate the attacks from Mohamed's flat because he was the only one who lived alone as Omar planned to get married the next day. Mohamed had to buy a rucksack for himself and agreed to buy enough chapati flour necessary to make the main charge. At around 4 AM, the four conspirators woke up Ishmail, who was sleeping in the living room. Ishmail led them in prayer and went back to sleep. Hamdi and Mohamed left at daybreak, taking along 21 bottles of concentrated hydrogen peroxide with them. Later that day, Ishmail went to Ikea to buy electrical supplies.¹⁰⁷

Omar's Wedding

Also on 16 July, Omar finalized the agreement for his marriage to Fardosa Abdullahi. He had met her four months before and her mother took a liking to him. They negotiated the dowry down to £3,000.¹⁰⁸ She was a 17-year-old girl, born in Somalia, who had immigrated to England when she was six. She had a history of mental disorder that required long hospitalizations. She later claimed she felt pressure by her family to acquiesce to the marriage within weeks of leaving the hospital.

On Sunday 17 July, Omar married her in a religious ceremony presided over by the Finchley Mosque imam. Of course, she was not at the ceremony, but her stepfather represented her interests.¹⁰⁹ Ibrahim and Abdu Ali were there for Omar, but Ishmail, who was cleaning the mosque at the time, later complained that he had not been invited. After the ceremony, Omar saw Ishmail at the flat and told him, "I'm a married man and my wife is coming soon, sort yourself out." Abdu Ali invited him to come and sleep at his flat upstairs at 65 Curtis House.¹¹⁰ Omar later testified, "When I got married, from the 17th until the 20th, I stayed with Fardosa in the house. Ibrahim and Asiedu [Ishmail] stayed upstairs, but when I was sleeping one of them could come to the other room but as soon as I got up they [would] have to go upstairs, so Asiedu used to come in the mornings, I used to see him sometimes in the mornings to come and have shower . . . but as soon as I got up they would go upstairs."¹¹¹

That Sunday, Hamdi, his son, and Mohamed went to Covent Garden market. Mohamed bought his rucksack and Hamdi bought some stuff for his family. Mohamed also bought the chapati flour.¹¹² At 65 Curtis House, Ibrahim talked to Ishmail about getting involved. "He didn't say in terms, 'I'm going to join,'" Ibrahim testified, "but he was agreeing with me that something has to be done and he was strongly against the war and agreeing with what I was saying . . . I was under the impression that he agreed and he wanted to join."¹¹³

On Monday 18 July, Ishmail went to work painting the whole day with someone from the mosque. The next day, he did some gardening and got locked out of the flat in the evening, as Abdu Ali was not home. Omar saw Ishmail on the staircase that evening. "On the 19th," he later said, "I spoke to Asiedu [Ishmail] . . . and Asiedu was willing to come, I told him what the plan was going to be because me and Asiedu are more closer than to Ibrahim. . . . He said anything to help, and I said to him, 'There's no

pressure on you, it's up to you. If you want to do it, you can do it. If you don't want to do it, it's up to you." Ishmail fell asleep on the staircase until Abdu Ali came and invited him to finish the night at his flat.¹¹⁴

The Failed Bombings

On the evening of 19 July, Ibrahim and Hamdi went to Mohamed's flat at Dalgarno Gardens around midnight. Ibrahim told them that the demonstration would take place on 21 July. They experimented with weaving electric wires from inside their rucksacks through their clothes and into their pocket, where they connected the wires to a snap connector to a nine-volt battery. They talked until the 4 AM Fajr prayer before Ibrahim borrowed Hamdi's car to return to 65 Curtis House. Afterward, he went downstairs to Omar's flat as the latter had gone to his in-laws early that morning and fell asleep on the couch till early afternoon.¹¹⁵

Ishmail later claimed that Ibrahim left a booby-trap bomb in a sideboard at 58 Curtis House to explode when the police opened it after the attack. Ibrahim allegedly did this when he was by himself in Omar's flat that afternoon. This explains the manufacture of just one bomb at that flat. When Ishmail returned to Omar's flat after the failed attempted bombings, he allegedly discovered the booby-trapped bomb and flushed it down the toilet himself as well as the rest of the concentrated hydrogen peroxide and tried to get rid of compromising evidence at the flat.¹¹⁶

At Omar's flat, when Ishmail got back from work in the early evening, Ibrahim told him that the operation would take place the next day. According to Ibrahim, "he didn't say no, only, he didn't say, yes." Ibrahim got the impression that Ishmail was going to participate.¹¹⁷ Ishmail's recollection at trial was of course different but he confirmed that Ibrahim told him that the operation was the next day and asked him to come along. He admitted that "I didn't just say 'yes,' but I didn't say I'm not going with them." He tried to excuse his decision to go with them by claiming that he was homeless and "felt very, very depressed" and could not focus. On the same day, Hamdi and Mohamed spent the day together praying at the mosque, playing Play Station, and just waiting for the evening at Hamdi's flat.¹¹⁸

In the evening, Omar returned to his flat, where Ibrahim and Ishmail were waiting for him. Ishmail later recalled that Omar told him that his wife loved him very much and he started tearing up. He wiped his tears and said, "This is from Sheitan [Satan]." Omar denied this at the trial. Just

before all three left Omar's flat, Ishmail remembered Ibrahim adjusting the sideboard. They packed their rucksacks with all they needed for the next day—the 6.25-liter plastic tubs, the electrical wiring, the electric scales, the TATP, thermometer, and masking tape—and drove to an Internet café where Ibrahim typed a short e-mail by himself around 11 PM.¹¹⁹ This mysterious e-mail may have been for Rauf, but the latter was probably hiding in the FATA after the successful London bombings and not in e-mail contact.

The three conspirators met with Hamdi and Mohamed near Hamdi's place, transferred the materiel into Mohamed's car, and drove off to Dalgarno Gardens after a quick stop at an open chicken shop. They ate and Ishmail drifted off to sleep until Fajr prayers when his co-conspirators woke him up to lead them in prayers. At trial, he claimed he went back to sleep¹²⁰ but the other four defendants said he was awake when Ibrahim made the five detonators. Ibrahim first made a hole in small light bulbs and filled them with TATP. He then rolled some paper around a pen, filled it with TATP, put a modified bulb in it, and attached wires to the bulb. Each detonator contained about five to eight grams of TATP, enough to ignite a main charge composed of 70 percent hydrogen peroxide, but not enough to do so with one having only a concentration of 58 percent.

At trial, Ishmail testified that, at this point, he allegedly started to appreciate the reality of the suicide operation: "I just left the room . . . like automatic, so I went into the toilet and I started crying. I cried for some time." He was terrified. He claimed that Omar, who had seen him crying, tried to reassure him, but all the other defendants rejected his version at the trial. On direct examination, before Ishmail turned on him, Ibrahim testified that Ishmail told him he was not going to go ahead with the demonstration. Ibrahim told Ishmail, "Okay, you can do whatever you want, just don't rock the boat. Don't tell the others." Ibrahim did not want the others to feel discouraged.¹²¹

Mohamed went out to buy five sets of transport cards for the conspirators and his brother Wahbi came around 8 AM to repair his computer and take Mohamed's will for his fiancée and their two children. After Wahbi's departure, all five conspirators spread plastic bin liners over the floor and mixed the main charge of three liters of concentrated hydrogen peroxide with chapati flour slowly so as not to generate much heat and bubbles. They poured the mixture into the plastic tubs, where a hole covered by tape had already been made. Ibrahim inserted the detonator into the tubs from the bottom and sealed it, with the detonator wires hanging out. He cut

holes in the rucksacks so as to thread the wires through them and into the participants' pockets, where the wires were connected to a snap. They secured screws, nails, bolts, and metal washers as shrapnel around the plastic tubs with some tape and inserted them into the rucksacks, with their lid still off to let off the gases. They waited until the last minute to close the lids.¹²² They shaved their hair and beards in order to blend in with the crowd. They were now ready to carry out their attacks.

The conspirators made their final selection of targets: Ibrahim was to go to the Bank Underground station; Omar, to Warren Street; Mohamed, to Oval; Hamdi, to Shepherd's Bush; and Ishmail, to White City. Since their targets were spread out over the city, the conspirators left in two teams. One consisting of Ibrahim, Omar, and Mohamed traveled to Stockwell Park in Mohamed's car and waited. They called Hamdi back at Mohamed's flat to signal for him and Ishmail to get going to their respective sites. They closed the lid on their bomb containers, put on their rucksacks, and went into the Underground. Between 12:30 and 1:00 PM, four of the conspirators tried to detonate their respective bombs, but the main charges did not explode. Ishmail abandoned his bomb in a nearby shrub, where it was found two days later.¹²³

All the conspirators fled from their respective crime scenes. Ishmail returned to Omar's flat, where he cleaned up most of the compromising evidence. He went to the police on 26 July and was arrested. Omar escaped in one of his wife's burkas and fled to Birmingham, where he was arrested on 27 July. Ibrahim and Mohamed hid at Mohamed's flat, where they were arrested on 29 July. Hamdi's wife helped him escape to Brighton and then Rome via the Eurostar. He was arrested in Rome on 29 July and extradited to England on 22 September. Yahya was detained in Ethiopia on 29 November 2005 and interviewed by the British police. He returned to Britain on 20 December 2005 and was arrested at Gatwick Airport.

Ibrahim, Omar, Osman, and Mohamed were charged with conspiracy to murder; Asiedu was charged with conspiracy to cause an explosion likely to endanger life; and Yahya was charged with collecting or making a record of information of a kind likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing an act of terrorism. Their trial started on 11 January 2007 at Woolwich Crown Court. On 9 July 2007, a jury convicted Ibrahim, Omar, Hamdi, and Mohamed, who were each sentenced to life imprisonment, with a minimum term of 40 years. The jury was unable to reach a verdict for Ishmail and Yahya. On 5 November 2007, Yahya pled guilty to his

charge and was sentenced to six years and nine months imprisonment. On 9 November 2007, Ishmail pled guilty to his charge and was sentenced to life imprisonment, with a minimum term of 33 years and recommended deportation.

Over a dozen more people were also arrested and convicted in connection to this case for helping the suspects escape arrest. In addition, Mohammed Hamid and a half dozen more were later arrested for violating the new Terrorism Act of 2006.

CHAPTER 5

OVERT

THE TRANSATLANTIC AIRLINES LIQUID BOMBS PLOT

AT THE TIME THAT Rashid Rauf was organizing the training of the Theseus and Vivace leaders, he was also organizing the training of leaders of a third plot, whose investigation and prosecution the British authorities later named Operation Overt. Like Crevice and Theseus, this one emerged from a network of protest against British foreign policy and support for Kashmiri and then Afghan refugees and fighters.

The Walthamstow Cluster

Abdulla Ahmed Ali, Ahmed to his friends, was born in Newham in October 1980. His parents came to Britain in the 1960s from Jhelum, in the Punjab Province of Pakistan. His oldest brother, Dawood Khan, born in 1972, became an IT consultant and was politically active in the Stop the War movement. Another older brother, Umar Khan, became a property developer and had a part-time job in the Underground. A younger brother became a probation officer with the Home Office. Shortly after Ali was born, his whole family migrated back to Jhelum, where Ali spent the first seven years of his life before returning to Walthamstow, London, in 1987.¹

Ali met Arafat Khan in primary school. Arafat was six months younger, born in Gujranwala, Pakistan, and his family immigrated to Walthamstow in 1982. His father, a lawyer in Pakistan, had first come to Britain alone

and worked for Customs and Excise in Leeds. He went back to Pakistan to get married and take care of his ailing mother. When the family returned to Britain, he worked as a bookkeeper. He strongly believed in integration and the family was secular. They gave Christmas presents to neighbors and ate turkey on Christmas.²

Ali and Arafat met Oliver Savant in secondary school. Savant was their age and born in England of an Indian father and English mother. His father had immigrated to England in the 1960s, became an architect and photographer, and married a Church of England bookkeeper. The three teenagers were often together and shared an interest in football, rap music, and going out.³

The paths of the three friends diverged when they went to college. At 15, Ali became religious from a cultural perspective: a book on Islam lying around his house had kindled his interest. A little later, a group from the Tablighi Jamaat visiting his mosque invited him to go to another mosque for a three-day weekend, which he found a good spiritual experience. He also became politically aware at that age listening to the news. "I remember the Gulf War," he later recalled, "the first one. I must have been about 12 then. . . . When I was 15 or 16, I think the Bosnian War was going on and I can remember the images of concentration camps, of people looking like skeletons . . . and I was aware they were Muslims." About a year later, his family got the Internet, which opened a new world of information for him. Although he spoke English, Urdu, Punjabi, and a little Arabic, he could only read English, but he did not confine himself to the British press. "I've known from a young day not to believe everything the press say[s] so I've always tried to see the other point of view and understand . . . be objective about things. . . . I would just read and read and read about it until I felt satisfied I understand what's going on."⁴ He became politically active at university, where he eventually got a degree in computer systems engineering, but did not join any political or religious groups.

Savant went on to study product design but quickly lost interest. He went into debt—about £800—and dropped out after a year in 1998. He converted to Islam and took Ibrahim as his first name. His conversion brought him closer to Ali, who gave him £400 to cover some of his debts. Savant moved back home and worked in retail at department stores.⁵ He received a police caution for possession of a small amount of cannabis in 1999.

While at college, Arafat met Tanvir Hussain, who was the same age, and introduced him to Savant and Ali. Hussain was born in Blackburn of Pakistani immigrants, who had moved to London in the late 1980s. He was an average student, who liked to play sports. He studied information technology and got a GNVQ in it. When Arafat was studying for his A-levels, his father died of a heart attack in Pakistan. He went to the funeral and did poorly on his exams when he returned. He found it hard to cope and started taking drugs. He hung out with the wrong crowd and got two convictions, one for possession of drugs and another for car theft.⁶ In the late 1990s, Arafat, Savant, and Hussain played soccer together, drank, smoked, got into drugs, and went out to clubs to chase girls.⁷ They had part-time jobs and were not interested in politics or religion like their friend Ali.

IMA Charity Work

September 11, 2001, was a watershed for Ali and his friends. The U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 created a flood of refugees in Pakistan. Several Muslim organizations that had up to then focused on Kashmiri refugees switched to providing humanitarian aid to the new Afghan refugees. Mohammed Patel, one of the organizers of the Islamic Medical Association, handed out leaflets at Friday prayers asking for collection for clothing, goods, blankets, tinned food, and milk. Patel was a 39-year-old self-employed car mechanic, who had emigrated from Gujarat, India. He was married and had a 12-year-old son, Abdul Muneem Patel. He was involved in charitable work on behalf of Kashmiri refugees and became the head of the UK office of the IMA, which was located on Chatsworth Road, right across the street from Hamid's Al Quran bookstore.⁸ By 2002, it ran an ambulance service for two refugee camps near Chaman on the Afghan border. Around March 2002, Patel left for Pakistan to run the charity in the field.

Dawood, Ali's older brother, knew Patel from before and encouraged Ali to volunteer for the charity during the Afghan crisis. Ali had time on his hand. "In the evenings," he testified at trial, "we would go to the charity shop and we had to organize and sort out all the clothes, so you had to separate men's clothes from the women's clothes and if they come in suit—trousers, top—put them together, take out the rubbish people are throwing

out . . . then put them in polycarbonate bags and then stitch them up ready to be put in a container."⁹

Ali dragged his friends Arafat, Savant, and Hussain to the IMA office and proselytized on its behalf, designing leaflets and a website, collecting charity at the mosque, and writing letters. The four friends became more religious and also politically active in the Stop the War movement. They prayed at the neighborhood fundamentalist mosque on Queen's Road, where they met Waheed Zaman, a devout teenager from a Kashmiri military family and about three years younger than them, who lived across the street from the mosque and prayed there every evening. He did poorly in school but was an avid soccer player and often played with Savant.

The High Wycombe Duo

Ali also briefly met future fellow co-conspirators Assad Sarwar and Umar Islam at the IMA office. Both were from High Wycombe, about 30 miles northwest of central London. Sarwar was Ali's age; his parents had immigrated to England in the 1970s from Kashmir. His uneducated father worked as a laborer but pressured his children to get a good education. Sarwar was a shy student, who got homesick when he went away to Chichester University. In early 2001, he became religious and started praying regularly at the local mosque and attending lectures at its Muslim education center. There, he befriended Umar Islam, as they had both recently embraced Islam.¹⁰

Umar Islam was born Brian Young and was two years older. His Caribbean immigrant parents were devout Christians and forced their children to attend church, Sunday school, and church events. He did well in school and obtained a GNVQ in business studies and finance in 1996. By that time, he had become a Rastafarian. The lyrics of reggae songs describing the past transatlantic slave trade made him politically aware. He started dating a girl his age, who already had a son. His father did not approve of the relationship and threw him out of the house. Young moved in with her, fathered a son in 1998, worked a few odd jobs, and hung out with an older Caribbean couple, discussing spiritual matters and smoking a lot of marijuana. In 1999, he, his girlfriend, and her children moved to Barbados to learn more about Rastafarianism. They grew disillusioned with it and came back to High Wycombe in early 2000. When he came back, his older Caribbean friend, who had been a heavy smoker and very disorganized, had

straightened out his life by converting to Islam. Young was impressed and followed in his friend's steps. He broke up with his girlfriend, converted to Islam in March 2001, and took the name Umar Islam. It took him a couple of months of wean himself from marijuana before attending the local mosque, where he met Sarwar. They attended the same study circles to learn the rituals of their religion.¹¹

In the fall of 2001, Sarwar studied sports science at university but, after three months, felt it was too competitive and switched to earth sciences before dropping out altogether in March 2002. This was a blow to his self-confidence. Two local friends volunteering at the IMA encouraged Sarwar and Islam to volunteer there. IMA was recruiting people to drive its ambulances in Chaman. Both Sarwar and Islam volunteered: they took an ambulance first aid course in the summer and flew to Pakistan in early November 2002 to drive the IMA ambulances. The misery of the camps greatly affected them. Islam recalled, "It opened my eyes a lot. It made me more grateful for the luxuries that I had basically back in England. It saddened me that . . . so many millions of people had to suffer just because of the actions of a few people."¹²

Ali did not confine his proselytism to the IMA. He went to conferences and demonstrations, participated in the million people Stop the War march (15 February 2003) and distributed leaflets protesting the impending invasion of Iraq. "It felt good . . . to know that you're doing something," he later recalled, "you're getting your voice heard, but more than that what I liked about it was that there was just so many people there from all walks of life, nationalities and colors. . . . That just impressed upon you that people are all the same really, regardless of their differences."¹³ Ali also protested the new security legislation, which included detention without trial, and he wrote petitions to members of Parliament. His brother Dawood encouraged him to go to websites and to print letters, get members of the community and mosque to sign them, and send them to the home secretary.

Dispensing Charity to Refugees in Chaman

Around December 2002, Patel temporarily returned to England from the field. He was planning to go to Gujarat, India, to take a relative about half his age as his second wife. His first wife in London was upset and refused to speak to him. Savant had grown close to Patel during his work at the

IMA. He had volunteered to go to Pakistan as an ambulance driver, but the IMA trustees turned him down because he had no relative there, his family had objected, and his asthma had flared up. Knowing that Savant would stay behind, Patel left him a hard drive to keep for him.¹⁴

It took the IMA volunteers about a year to fill up a 40-foot container. Ali volunteered to deliver it to the camps and drive an IMA ambulance in Pakistan and, on 26 February 2003, flew to Karachi, where he met Mohammed Altaf, the project manager for Doctors Worldwide, who was the IMA contact person in Pakistan, and Umar Islam, whom Ali had come to replace. Islam briefed him on the nature of the job for a week before returning to England.¹⁵

A few days after Islam's departure, Ali and Altaf flew to the Quetta IMA office, which consisted of an office, a storeroom, two ambulances, and some equipment. Sarwar was still there as an ambulance driver and overlapped with Ali for about two weeks before going to his ancestral village in Kashmir. Ali delivered IMA goods to the refugee camps and the sight of their misery affected him: "There's loads of people everywhere. It's so mucky, smelly, loads of kids running 'round crying, really like appalling conditions. Lots of arguing, kind of chaotic. . . . I don't think anything can prepare you for something like that. . . . Emotionally it was very straining. Physically, it was hard." Ali felt guilty about being lucky enough to have water, food, and warmth. "I had a good couple of jumpers and a nice warm jacket and these refugees were pretty much in rags and torn up pieces of clothes." He later recalled, "When you're there, in front of them, and you see the immense suffering they're going through, it's painful. . . . It's always the kids crying and running around and the women fighting over. . . . You're trying to help them and at the same time they're trying to, like, stampede you just to get some of the stuff you got; and on the one hand you're giving them but, on the other hand, you're kind of like trying to stop yourself from being grabbed and having things yanked off you. . . . The smell is really bad because they don't have proper toilets." The refugees' physical conditions were atrocious. "Some were maimed, some had their legs blown off, some had bits of their fingers missing, scars, burn marks, skinny, rugged, rough-looking faces. . . . There were lots of deaths in these camps, daily. . . . It's mostly kids that were dying, children, young children . . . seeing the mothers going through pulling their hair out." It made Ali cry a lot when he was by himself. Both Sarwar and he blamed Britain and the United States for this suffering.¹⁶

On one of Ali's trips to Chaman, his group was ambushed by bandits, who took his money and passport. He got a new passport in Pakistan. At the end of his trip, he went for a few weeks to see relatives in Jhelum and flew back to England on 22 April 2003. After his return, he relaxed at home for about a month. Sarwar returned to England on 29 May 2003.¹⁷ They continued to volunteer at IMA and went together to evening political lectures. Sarwar joined Umar Islam as a mailman in High Wycombe and also volunteered for another local Islamic charity. Ali did a few odd construction jobs for his brother Umar Khan, peddled cell phones and computers, and got married to Cossor Anwar in July 2003. She moved in with him at his mother's council house. Ali later portrayed his marriage as full of love and mutual support, but his wife, at her separate trial, distanced herself from her husband. She claimed that moving in with her in-laws was a "culture shock." She had grown up in a moderate Muslim household, but her husband insisted that she wear a veil. When she refused, he gave her a "love bite" on her cheek so she would not forget to cover her face. She also described him slapping her face so hard that she spun around and his hand left an imprint on her. She ran back to her parents and they complained to the police station, but she declined to press charges against him.¹⁸

The Radicalization of Ali

At the beginning of 2004, Mohammed Patel temporarily returned to London. He had not been able to bring his new wife to England and was on his way to South Africa to be with her. His first wife had divorced him. His teenage son, Abdul Muneem Patel, had become Savant's friend. Before leaving, Patel left Savant two sealed boxes and his car, an Audi TDI 80. In June, after he left, Abdul Muneem gave Savant about £4,000 to wire to his father to help him open a car repair shop in South Africa. When Savant got married a month later and moved, he came across these boxes and opened them by curiosity. They contained an improvised explosives manual, correspondence in a foreign language, videotapes of mujahedin fighting, and a stun gun.¹⁹

Meanwhile, Ali went on hajj in January 2004 with his younger brother and some friends, including Hussain, who was becoming more devout and Ali's best friend.²⁰ Ali left his pregnant wife behind at her parents' house. Shortly after returning from hajj, he wrote a will in March 2004 stating, "We know with full certainty that we are going to die so let us aim high

and strive for the best death, i.e. *shahada* (martyrdom), and let us do the most pleasing deed to Allah and make the greatest sacrifice, fight with our life, tongue and wealth in the path of Allah."²¹

Ali was not forthcoming at his trial and put the date of his radicalization two years later, in the spring of 2006 after the devastation of the 8 October 2005 earthquake in Kashmir. However, his testament suggests that he was already radicalized by the time he wrote it. He was disillusioned with both charity work and the political process. He testified that having

been on demonstrations, protests, constantly reading the news, human rights reports . . . seeing both sides of the story . . . I became less enthusiastic and confident in things like protests and marches. We had the biggest march ever, 1 million people, and it didn't seem to do anything. We knew now the war was illegal in Iraq and it wasn't a secret no more. It was a lie. It was just deceit. It was a criminal war. In my eyes that made the government criminals because it was a criminal act what they did and obviously they weren't listening to the people and I felt that aid work, as good as it was, is very limited in how far it's going to go. For every two people you help, another 100 are going to be coming into the refugee camps. So, to sum it up, basically I thought the root problem was not dealing with refugees and protests, these are just dealing with the symptoms. The root problem was the foreign policy and that's something that should be tackled.²²

His feeling about the futility of mass protest to prevent coalition forces from invading Iraq fits the 2003–2004 time frame better than the spring of 2006. Notes later recovered from his house indicated he was listening to taped lectures by Anwar al Awlaki in December 2003: "Obviously I like this lecturer. . . . The way he explains and talks, is really good." From them, he learned a lot about the history of the classical period of Islam and jihad. "I watch the news and stuff and it's impossible to read up on the Afghan War or the Iraq War or any war in the Muslim world without this word cropping up and obviously lots of things are said about it, but . . . my aim is to try and get the most authoritative original sources and study them. Because this work is considered the most authoritative, I thought it the best way to understand this topic."²³

Ali's wife gave birth to a premature baby boy suffering from Edward's Syndrome, leading to his death a few weeks later in April 2004.²⁴ The couple became very depressed over this loss. Cossor was always crying and Ali supported her as much as he could. To console her, he suggested they go to Pakistan for a holiday and visit her sick grandmother. They left in September 2004. His will seems to indicate an additional motivation: fighting for jihad. They stayed with a cousin in Karachi for a week, went to Jhelum for a while before visiting Cossor's grandmother.

At his trial, Ali testified that he then called up Altaf, the Doctors World-wide project manager. In his testimony, Sarwar also pointed to Altaf as the man who introduced him to a Kashmiri militant, who taught him how to make bombs. Since throughout the trial, they both tried to protect al Qaeda members, Altaf was probably not their intermediary to Rashid Rauf. Instead, I suspect that it was more likely Mohammed Patel, who had clear jihadi sympathies and a manual on how to manufacture explosives and knew Ali, Sarwar, Gulzar, and al Ghabra. More on this soon.

Explosives Training with al Qaeda

Rashid Rauf's report tells another story. He met Ali during this trip, around the same time that Mohamed Sidique Khan, Shehzad Tanweer, and Muktar Ibrahim were training. It is unclear how the contact was made, but when they met, Ali wanted to fight and die as a mujahed in Afghanistan. Rauf wrote, "He was a very clever, patient brother and a natural leader." Rauf introduced Ali to Abu Ubaydah al Masri, who convinced Ali to conduct a terrorist operation in Britain. According to Rauf, as a result of his training, "a big change came over his temperament when he first came and when he left."²⁵

After his training, Ali returned to England with his wife in January 2005. After their return to England, Ali occasionally worked for his brother Umar and sold cell phones and laptops with his best friend Hussain. He and his wife moved into a council flat. After a miscarriage, she became pregnant again in the spring of 2005. During that time, Ali may also have acted as Rauf's intermediary to Muktar Ibrahim as Ali's cell phone called Ibrahim's cell phone several times in May.²⁶ Ali also resumed contact with Sarwar, who had quit his job at the Royal Mail in February 2005 and survived on a few odd jobs selling martial arts DVDs on the Internet and cell phones. He went on to work as a contractor for British Telecommunication during that summer, between 18 July and 27 September.²⁷

Ali returned to Pakistan on 6 June 2005 for more advanced training. At his trial, he claimed that he went there to see relatives and start a business with Altaf. His explanation is not convincing since he presented no evidence for any business dealings on that trip. A more plausible motivation is suggested in Cossor's diary when he left. She wrote that she was becoming "more and more attached to the cause for which you are striving . . . and the reason for which we are apart. I hope and pray Allah grants your wish and gives you the highest level of shahada."²⁸ This suggests that he left to fight and die and that she was supportive of his enterprise despite her later denial and acquittal at her separate trial.

On his trip, Ali was accompanied by 18-year-old Adam Osman Khatib, whose father was Mauritian and mother British. Khatib was a close friend of Ali's younger brother and had a history of driving offenses. His newly adopted radical Islamist views and anti-Semitic outbursts in the classroom had alarmed his teachers. He had signed a school assignment "Adam Osama bin Laden." He started wearing traditional Islamic attire and hanging out with friends dressed like him, whom his parents refused to allow in the house. Khatib worked in a factory after he left school and Ali quickly became his mentor.²⁹

Rauf wrote that, in Pakistan, Ali underwent extensive training with Abu Ubaydah while Khatib went through basic training. They were training at the time of the London bombings. Rauf believed that the success of the bombings would make it difficult for Ali to get hydrogen peroxide and Abu Ubaydah taught him to how to make explosive devices with gas. Sarwar flew to Pakistan on 1 October 2005 to join them. Sarwar later testified that he had met Altaf, who had introduced him to a militant named Jamil Shah, a fictitious character to hide the true identity of Rashid Rauf. While Ali and Khatib wanted to become martyrs, Sarwar wanted to participate in the operation but did not want to kill himself. Therefore, Sarwar was tasked to support the others and stay behind in England to conduct further operations. He had a good sense of security and was taught to keep his work compartmented from the others. With Sarwar's arrival, Rauf and Abu Ubaydah changed their mind and decided that their best plan was to continue with hydrogen peroxide bombs, which raised the problem of procuring liquid hydrogen peroxide in England or smuggling it into the country.³⁰

Around that time, Mohammed Gulzar, Rauf's best friend in Birmingham, joined the conspiracy.³¹ At the trial, Gulzar testified that after Rauf and he fled England in May 2002, they first hid with the Tablighi

Jamaat in Raiwind, then he went alone to his paternal ancestral village in Kashmir until his grandmother died in December 2003, and he went finally to his maternal ancestral village in Punjab. On the advice of a relative, he went to Johannesburg, South Africa, on 19 June 2004 and opened an electronics store in Heidelberg with two other Pakistani immigrants. He got fake identity documents under the name of Altaf Ravat, which enabled him to get a South African identity card and finally a passport in August 2005. He befriended Mohammed Patel in South Africa. When Patel was diagnosed as suffering a thyroid condition aggravated by tuberculosis and pneumonia, Gulzar took care of him and took him to his medical appointments. Patel's mother and son, Abdul Muneem, came to visit him in the summer of 2005 and met Gulzar. Gulzar successfully tested his new passport by going to Botswana for a day on 13 September 2005 and returned to Pakistan on 28 September 2005.³² Apparently, Gulzar came to visit Rauf, Ali, and Sarwar at their training site. They overlapped for over two months in Pakistan. He became skilled in explosive manufacturing, as later e-mails show.³³

Back home, Cossor hoped that her husband would choose her "over the hoors" (*hoorees*, the black-eyed virgins promised to martyrs in paradise, meaning he would decide to come back to her rather than sacrifice himself in Afghanistan). She read books about Muslim warriors and noted, "I am even happier with what you are doing. It makes me eager to join you on your quest." When Ali notified her that he would come back after all, she was delighted. "I think I am going to make myself slimmer *inshallah* [God willing] as it will be good for me and I think you will be happier. I am going to start doing exercises on a daily basis and when we are together, I want you to do fighting training with me. . . . I miss my soulmate, husband, lover, comforter and companion." This contradicts her testimony at her trial that she hated her husband. She also wanted another child, besides the one in her belly. "I hope that when you attain shahada, I will have at least one small child and will be pregnant with another or at least be pregnant with a healthy baby at the least, *inshallah*."³⁴

Searching for Peroxide

In Pakistan, Ali received a call that his wife had gone into labor and he rushed home to be at her side. He and Khatib flew back on 5 December 2005 but missed the birth of his son, Saad, by one day. He took on a few

odd jobs such as selling cell phones or delivering food for an Indian takeout restaurant on weekends while receiving government benefits for unemployment. He also brought his best friend, Hussain, into the plot. Hussain traveled to Pakistan on 19 February 2006, underwent training on hydrogen peroxide by Rauf and Abu Ubaydah, and met Gulzar at the training site.³⁵

Sarwar returned to High Wycombe on 14 December 2005. He and Ali resumed seeing each other. Ali's testimony at trial that they decided to make a documentary to protest the Afghan and Iraqi wars and scare the public by exploding small devices is simply not credible.³⁶ They and Khatib were constantly text-messaging Rauf. They searched for potential targets and bomb-making material on the Internet. At that time, Rauf and Abu Ubaydah had not yet decided to target airplanes. From his previous work as a contractor for British Telecommunications, Sarwar had acquired a hard drive with the electric and energy grid of Britain. He also carefully examined the Bacton terminal of the Belgium-UK gas pipeline and gas refinery at Canary Wharf. He created a file on it on 22 February and last accessed it on 16 March.³⁷ In March, Khatib researched the properties of hexamine peroxide—an ingredient of HMTD for the detonator. In his notes, he warned his fellow plotters to "be extremely careful: the powder is extremely volatile and any contact could cause an explosion."³⁸ At the same time, he continued his impulsive behavior that brought him to the attention of the police, which issued him a community order for driving while disqualified. When Rauf found out, he cautioned Khatib via coded e-mail on 2 April 2006: "hi babe . . . keep out of trouble cos u will give my dad a heart attack!!!!!!!!!!!! . . . I think the wedding will be quick especially now dad is ok with it!!!! so pls keep out of trouble my dad hates trouble makers he will never let me get married to one!!!!!"³⁹

Hussain returned to London on 1 April. When he landed, he underwent a secondary investigation by Scotland Yard and MI5 for a few hours. They asked him about his background, education, work, political views, religious practices, and mosque. They showed him pictures of his friends and asked for information about them. He concluded that he and his friend had been under surveillance, but a relative who was an immigration officer reassured him that airport authorities commonly stopped traveling Muslims.⁴⁰

Sarwar tried to solve the problem of obtaining peroxide without alerting the authorities. He searched on the Internet for stores selling it in faraway places. On 25 April, he ordered hydrogen peroxide at a pharmacy in Carmarthen, south Wales, under an alias. Two days later, he drove there and

bought two liters of 35 percent hydrogen peroxide along with a few other items not to arouse suspicion. He placed an order for another three liters. The total price amounted to £226. On his way home, he was photographed speeding on the highway. Shortly thereafter, Ali and Hussain tested a hydrogen-peroxide-based explosive substance in a wooded area near their home, but the experiment failed. Ali reported it to Sarwar and Rauf, who recalled him to Pakistan.⁴¹

New Plan: Liquid Bombs for Airplanes

Rauf and Abu Ubaydah's planning had evolved in a new direction. They had first explored ways to smuggle liquid peroxide via carry-on or checked luggage by air. "We analyzed the various machines that were used for checking baggage and persons at airports," Rauf reported. "We found it was very difficult to detect liquid explosives." They settled on using rosewater bottles that were resealed to look unopened. "After analysis that it would be possible to take concentrated hydrogen peroxide on board, the thought came to our mind: would it be possible to detonate the hydrogen aboard an airplane?" This idea became the origin of the Transatlantic Airlines Liquid Bombs Plot. Over the next months, while the English conspirators were back in England, Abu Ubaydah and Rauf experimented with the construction of various devices in order to smuggle them onto a plane. As Rauf's report stated, "The discovery that hydrogen peroxide could be colored without losing its explosive properties was a major breakthrough." They "practiced how to open a drink bottle, empty it, and replace it with hydrogen peroxide, to make it seem unopened." Through trial and error, they discovered that half a liter of the liquid explosive—the size of a regular soft drink bottle—would be enough to destroy an airplane.⁴²

To keep with this theme of soft drinks, they manufactured a main charge from a mixture of concentrated hydrogen peroxide and Tang, a dissolvable, high-sugar-based product that is used in the making of soft drinks. This combination creates an energetic mixture that can be detonated. It could be disguised in half-liter bottles of Oasis or Lucozade soft drinks and carried on board an aircraft. Ali was trained to drill a small hole at the bottom of unopened soft drink plastic bottles, drain them of their content, inject the concentrated hydrogen peroxide-Tang mixture with a syringe and seal the hole with Superglue to make the bottle appear untouched.⁴³

The detonators initiating the main explosive charge would be disguised as AA batteries. The batteries would be cut open at the bottom end, emptied of content, and filled with HMTD. Batteries in Pakistan were cheaply made and easily pried open, while the ones in Britain were sealed properly and too difficult to modify. Batteries would have to be imported from Pakistan. An electric element, such as a subminiature light bulb or filament connected to a disposable camera battery, could ignite the HMTD, which would set off the main charge.⁴⁴ On the plane, the bombers would insert their battery-detonator into the bottle for the final assembly of their device in the bathroom and detonate it in the air.

In mid-May, Ali returned to Pakistan with his father allegedly to visit his sick uncle. Apparently, Ali's multiple trips to Pakistan, in the immediate post-London bombings era, made the Security Service suspicious. It questioned Ali upon his departure at Heathrow Airport about his religious views and his background and asked ISID to keep an eye on him in Pakistan. Ali's cousin came to pick him and his father up at Islamabad Airport and they were stopped by a police car on the way to Jhelum. The police also conducted discreet inquiries about Ali in the village. One of his cousins, who was friendly with a police officer, told Ali that ISID had requested the search of their car.⁴⁵

Rauf waited for a week before coming to Jhelum to pick up Ali, who told him about the incident. Rauf and Abu Ubaydah worried about it and hoped it was just a routine check. Abu Ubaydah trained Ali on their new devices. Rauf noted, "We trained (him) quickly, and wanted him to leave ASAP. He was also told to do anti-surveillance measures when he got back and only start work when he was comfortable that everything was clear."⁴⁶ Ali's mission was now to conduct simultaneous midair bombings of multiple airplanes targeting flights heading for the United States. The details of the plan and the devices continued to evolve through constant experimentation and were not completely worked out until July 2006, requiring Ali and Sarwar in England to be in constant communication with Rauf in Pakistan.

The conspirators settled on a division of labor. Ali was to recruit the other bombers, prepare them for their mission, and, with Hussain, modify AA batteries into detonators and prepare the explosive devices for final assembly on the planes. Sarwar was to manufacture the explosive substances for both the main charge and the detonator, and transfer these mixtures to Ali clandestinely. This process of concentration of hydrogen

peroxide to about 70 percent was the most time consuming and delicate part of the operation, as we have seen in the previous two plots. Abu Ubaydah had learned from the failure of the Vivace case and the near failure of the Theseus case that the method for estimating high-level concentrations was inaccurate and had worked out another more accurate formula.⁴⁷ Ali and Sarwar compartmentalized their respective tasks and avoided being seen together since Sarwar would stay behind to carry out further operations.

Sarwar was also recalled for training on these new techniques. He flew to Pakistan on 19 June, after burying the hydrogen peroxide he had bought in a wood near his house. He overlapped with Ali for four days as the latter returned to London on 24 June. Ali had taken notes on the new manufacture process and overall plan in a diary:

Clean batteries. Perfect disguise. Drinks bottles, Lucozade, orange, red. Oasis, orange, red. Mouthwash, blue, red. Calculate exact drops of Tang, plus colour. Make in HP. . . . Check time to fill each bottle. Check time taken to dilute in HP. Decide on which battery to use for D. Note: small is best. Get bags, keyrings, electrics for battery, toothbrush, toothpaste, aftershave. . . . Select date. Five days B4. All link up. Prepare. Dirty mag to distract. Condoms. One drink used, other keep in pocket maybe will not go through machine, put keys and chewing gum on D in the elec device. Keep ciggies. Camera cases. The drinks that you drink should be dif flava. . . . Lucozade, red, 1.5 drops, one teaspoon Tang, one teaspoon orange, 12 drops. Oasis, red. On red dye. Orange, two times mango.⁴⁸

When Ali returned to England, British agents were ready and surreptitiously opened his luggage in a back room. They found two packs of 30 AA Toshiba batteries and a large quantity of Tang powder packets in four different flavors.⁴⁹ This was enough to convince the Security Service that Ali was planning to make a bomb with them. It started a full field investigation on him, including intensive surveillance of his activities and communications. Unaware of this new scrutiny, Ali e-mailed to Rauf two days after his arrival, "im cool I got back from holiday everything went fine I didn't get any problem at all . . . im just getting settled it will take a few days then ill start trading. Ill send you my new no as soon as I get it. Tariq is cool I saw

him and he is ready to trade as well.”⁵⁰ I suspect that Tariq is a code name for Hussain.

The South African Nonconnection

Meanwhile Gulzar returned to South Africa on 20 March 2006, reported his passport lost, and applied for a new one to erase any trace of his trip to Pakistan. A new passport was issued on 19 April 2006.⁵¹ He reconnected with Mohammed Patel, whose health had greatly improved. In London, Patel's son, Abdul Muneem, who had just turned 17, married a Muslim woman, seven years his senior. The newlywed couple came to see Patel for their honeymoon and met with Gulzar. Another visitor from England around that time was Mohammed al Ghabra, a source of much speculation as a terrorist mastermind in the press and counterterrorism literature. The reality seems more prosaic.

Al Ghabra was a 26-year-old Syrian immigrant to Forest Gate, London, who had become a British citizen. According to the U.S. Treasury notice designating him as supporting al Qaeda, he originally went to Pakistan probably to fight in Kashmir and had undergone guerilla training at one of the many Kashmiri camps. He was in Pakistan during the post-9/11 invasion of Afghanistan and helped foreign militants fleeing Afghanistan relocate elsewhere. In his new mission, he became part of the radical Islamist community in Pakistan.⁵² It is unknown whether he ever met Rashid Rauf during this time but they traveled in the same circles. At that time, as we saw in Crevice, insurgents in Afghanistan needed special equipment like night-vision goggles to fight a modern guerilla war and it is likely that al Ghabra became a middleman for them. The U.S. Treasury suggests that his main contact was Abu Faraj al Libi. Abu Faraj was hiding in Pakistan with his family for the first 10 months of 2002. In October 2002, Abdal Hadi al Iraqi asked Abu Faraj to work for him in Peshawar organizing the purchase of supplies for fighters, including medicine, equipment, food, and clothing. In 2003, Osama bin Laden directed Abu Faraj to take on the responsibility of collecting donations, organizing travel, and distributing funds to al Qaeda families in Pakistan.⁵³ It was probably in this logistical capacity that al Ghabra helped Abu Faraj, by getting from his British contacts equipment difficult to find locally. Al Ghabra seems to have had a strictly logistical support role and not one involved in operations either in Afghanistan or in the West.

Al Ghabra returned to London in mid-2003 and was arrested in October 2003 on charges of fraud and possession of a document or record that could be useful to terrorists. He was acquitted on 19 April 2004 of those charges and released. Despite his release, the Security Service kept him under surveillance. One of his acquaintances from Forest Gate, an Iraqi refugee, drove Muktar Ibrahim, Rizwan Majid, and Shakeel Ismail to Heathrow Airport on 11 December 2004, which turned out to be their trip to meet Rashid Rauf. Nothing could be pinned on al Ghabra but this did not stop the press from speculating about his role.⁵⁴

In mid-April 2006, al Ghabra flew to South Africa, where he visited Mohammed Patel and met with Gulzar. His friends called him “Gabs,” and the alleged purpose of his visit was to set up the sale of imitation leather biker jackets. Gulzar met him several times and put down about £650 for 70 jackets. Al Ghabra's stay in South Africa overlapped with Abdul Muneem's visit and he returned to London in late May. After his return, he changed his appearance, shaved his unkempt beard, took on a more Western appearance, and assumed a low profile.

Coincidentally, either Abdul Muneem or al Ghabra brought a laptop computer to either Mohammed Patel or Gulzar. The laptop had been stolen in Birmingham and sold to Sarwar, who uploaded some software on it on 29 March 2006 at his home in High Wycombe. Sarwar later testified that he sold the laptop to someone from al Ghabra's neighborhood. In any case, Gulzar ended up with it and first accessed it on 7 June. Gulzar used it to investigate the disappearance of an Islamist extremist in South Africa and the killing of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq, which occurred around that time. Gulzar continued browsing for similar news until 25 June, when the recorded log stopped. Apparently, there was something wrong with the software because Gulzar reinstalled a Windows operating system on 27 June but without success. He later took the laptop with him to London.⁵⁵

The prosecutors and scholars writing about Overt postulated a South African connection to this plot, namely Gulzar. They argued that he was intentionally dispatched to be the “superintendent of this plot” in the field because he was a close friend of Rauf and bomb-making expert.⁵⁶ However, the Rauf document, which is so detailed on all the other aspects of the plot, completely fails to mention him. I strongly suspect that Gulzar's participation in Overt was accidental due to an unanticipated development: Gulzar fell in love.

Earlier on 20 March, when Gulzar was leaving Islamabad, he met a woman at the departure lounge when Pakistani authorities conducted a secondary screening on them. After a brief conversation, she gave him her name and phone number before they boarded their respective planes. She was Zora Saddique, a recent divorcee, four years his senior, living alone with two daughters, and working in a menial job at a hotel in Brussels. She had been born in London to a Pakistani father and a Philippine mother. She was raised in London, briefly in Pakistan, and in the Philippines, where her father died. She was a Christian like her mother; she got married as a teenager and went with her husband to Belgium, where they divorced in early 2006. She made a quick trip to Pakistan to sort out property left from her father and was eager to find a way out of her financial and social situation, as her former husband was harassing her.⁵⁷

Two days after their meeting, Gulzar texted her. At trial, the prosecutor portrayed her as "an extremely vulnerable woman" cynically manipulated by mastermind Gulzar and "prepared to do and say anything for the man that had repeatedly lied to her, but who she loved and was . . . prepared to sacrifice all in order to be with him."⁵⁸ On the contrary, the evidence presented in court was that Saddique was Gulzar's relentless pursuer. Not only did she respond immediately, but within two weeks, she spoke to him every day from local international call shops. She testified in court that she did "all the talking . . . all the running and the moving in this relationship."⁵⁹ Two months later, they agreed to marry as he was a religious Muslim and Muslims could not date casually. He wanted her to come and live in South Africa and she agreed for she did not want to spoil the relationship. In reality, she really wanted to go to England with her two daughters to get away from her former husband. Unbeknownst to him, she applied for a job at the London branch of the hotel chain she was working for. The marriage was supposed to be either in Belgium or South Africa, but Gulzar's application for a Belgian visa failed because his fake birth certificate was not adequate for an international birth certificate. This obstacle did not deter Saddique's resolve and she decided to come to South Africa for the marriage. "Now I know you love me, I'm not letting you go," she texted him. She cautiously booked a round-trip flight to Johannesburg for 29 June, with a return date of 15 July "because I was not so sure it was going to work out so I always had a return ticket to go back."⁶⁰ She cashed in all her savings, £500, and arrived on 30 June. Gulzar picked her up at the airport, dropped her off at the hotel, and went to the mosque to get married in a religious

ceremony. She acquiesced to the marriage by phone, and he returned to her hotel room a few hours later as her husband. They went to city hall two days later for the civil ceremony and their certificate was issued on 10 July. They planned to take their honeymoon in Mauritius.

However, the mutual deceptions they had carefully woven for each other quickly unraveled. Although he had assured her he would respect her appearance, he ordered her to cover up and wear Islamic clothes immediately after the marriage. She felt stuck in a foreign country and agreed. They visited the Belgian Consulate to straighten out his visa but in vain. She suggested going to England to live, but he refused and had 101 excuses for not going or else changed the subject. She told him she was a British citizen, wanted her daughters to grow up there, and had a job lined up there as well. As she later testified, "my mind was always back with my daughters, so I wanted to come here and we had fights about that too because I thought when I came to South Africa he agreed to everything and it was a total opposite [from] what I expected, the way he made me dress, he . . . wanted me to stay in South Africa." She became suspicious that his reluctance to go to England and his lack of family in South Africa seemed to hide something far more serious. She believed that he was lying to her but was too scared to confront him "in the middle of nowhere."⁶¹

On 14 July, they went to a travel agent to confirm her seat. The plan now was for her to sponsor him from Belgium as her husband. They had a fight and he told her he did not want her to go. At the agency, she changed her plans. She later testified, "I said in the agency, 'I want my ticket going to the United Kingdom. You come with me or not' because I was afraid I get stranded in South Africa. I had no money. He had no money, so I already knew at this point I was accepted [for work in England] so we had a fight. I said, 'Take it or leave it, I'm going. If you want to come with me, come. If not, then stay here.'" He caved in and decided to come along to the country where he was wanted for murder. Now, reconciled, they decided to take their honeymoon in Mauritius after all. She would use her return ticket to fly to London via Mauritius and he bought a round-trip ticket to London via Mauritius on that day, with a return date of 1 August. He said he would arrange for the accommodations in London.⁶²

The couple flew to Mauritius on 15 July. During their honeymoon, Gulzar called Abdul Muneem to tell him that he was coming to London with his new wife and asked him to find a place for them. The newlyweds

flew to Heathrow on 18 July, arriving late in the day. Abdul Muneem and his wife welcomed them and drove them to his in-laws' flat, where they spent two nights in a small spare bedroom. Abdul Muneem gave Gulzar two SIM cards for his cell phones. Gulzar activated a card the next day and texted Rauf in Pakistan that he was now in London.⁶³

The trial evidence, especially Saddique's compelling testimony backed by a long chain of texts to her fiancé, suggests that the South African connection was a red herring. Gulzar's participation in the plot was both accidental and opportunistic. Neither Rauf, Ali, nor Sarwar knew that he was coming to London.⁶⁴

Ali Recruits the Last Bombers

Meanwhile, Sarwar was in Pakistan learning new bomb-making techniques and Ali was assembling his team of suicide bombers from trusted long-term friends, who shared his political views, had participated with him in political activism, and had worked at the IMA. It is actually difficult to accurately identify all the conspirators in Overt. The plot was evolving all the time and depended on recruitment by Ali in England sanctioned by Rauf and Abu Ubaydah. The arrests of the conspirators were premature and interrupted this evolution: the manufacture of the main charge for the bombs had not even been started. To add to the confusion, the participants had various roles: the trainers in Pakistan, who directed the plot from far away; the suicide bombers, who would board the planes with their bombs; the bomb manufacturers and the logistics personnel, who stayed behind. In England, the active core of the plot was of course Ali and Sarwar, assisted by Hussain and Khatib.

The easiest way to identify the potential suicide bombers was through their acts in furtherance. As the plot was reaching its conclusion, many of them had reported their passports lost and applied for new ones to erase any compromising trip to Pakistan. They also applied for student loans to get money that they knew they would not repay, as Hussain did on 5 July at Barclays Bank for £8,000, the maximum amount.⁶⁵ More damning, they recorded wassiyas for explanation and propaganda purposes. Six had recorded their video by the time of their arrest. Khatib had not but was clearly another volunteer martyr, for a total of seven. Rauf claimed that two potential martyrs were not arrested because he had not yet reached out to them at the time of the arrests.⁶⁶

There were four clear conspirators, who had all trained in Pakistan: Ali, Sarwar, Khatib, and Hussain, who had become Ali's lieutenant. On 4 July, Ali sent Rauf a coded e-mail asking him when Sarwar was coming back with guidance and giving him an update on the recruitment. "My mate half guggie one he is up for the gig aswell is it ok if we put him in. he has sorted his looks out he no longer looks like a junkie. I believe he is ready to be promoted." Ali continued, "I spoke to fatty and explained to him he has to move his office within 1 month and start fresh. He is doing well he keeps his head down he dont link the junkies anymore. He did not get any probs on his last journey." These may be references to Ibrahim Savant, also known as "Ibo," and Arafat Khan, "Aro," respectively. Ali reported that he approached someone else, who decided not to participate: "Fatty is looking for some one else to go now." He ended, "my black mate said he is cool with the (rehearsal) trial run. Ill send him soon to the club for the weekend." The only black defendant was Umar Islam, also known as "Omar B." Apparently, Islam was already part of the conspiracy, probably through his friend Sarwar, as Ali did not have to propose him as a conspirator. The next day, Rauf approved: "Nice to hear fatty's in good shape! Half guggie seems ok too. But I will confirm and let u know, but I don't think it should be a prob."⁶⁷

Let us therefore return to Umar Islam, Arafat Khan, and Ibrahim Savant, the new members of the conspiracy, and look at their respective evolution since we left them. Islam was of course the Caribbean convert, Sarwar's friend, who went with him to Pakistan as an IMA ambulance driver. He was greatly affected by this experience and got married in October 2003 to an older pious and politically active Muslim woman of Pakistani origin. They went on hajj in January 2004 but this trip cost Islam his job at the Royal Mail because it did not authorize such a long-term absence so soon after getting the job. He found another job at Transport for London (he was checking whether people on buses had tickets), and moved there with his wife and two sons. He socialized with Ali and his friends—Ibrahim Savant and Waheed Zaman, with whom he took martial arts classes. They prayed together at the neighborhood Tablighi mosque. When Ali left for Pakistan in June 2005 and Cossor returned to her parents, Islam and his family temporarily moved into their vacant flat, rent free. Islam tried to go to Pakistan in October 2005 to join Ali and Sarwar, but a clerical error about his birthday on his new passport prevented him from leaving the country.⁶⁸

In January 2006, Islam's wife tried to introduce Sarwar to a prospective bride, whose parents had rented a restaurant for the occasion. Sarwar got confused about the date and did not show up, embarrassing Islam and his wife. This led to a falling out between the two friends until their arrests in August.⁶⁹ Islam had switched from hanging out with Sarwar to doing so with Savant, Zaman, and Ali in Walthamstow. It is not clear when he joined the conspiracy but his attempt to go to Pakistan in the fall of 2005 and the way he was referred to in the e-mails suggest that he had agreed to participate by the spring of 2006. He seems to have been the one designated to test airport security by going on a rehearsal flight to the United States with bomb materials.

The second recruit, Arafat Khan, was Ali's oldest friend from primary school and a close friend of Savant and Hussain. He had also volunteered at the IMA. By June 2006, he had become engaged, traveled to Pakistan to visit his family, and stayed in close touch with his friends. A possible indication of his early involvement was the fact that, on 3 July, he applied for an £8,000 career development loan from Barclays Bank, which was granted a week later. On the day that surveillance on Ali started, 5 July, Ali and Arafat were seen together in Ali's Citroen car.⁷⁰

The third recruit, Ibrahim Savant, was Ali's second oldest friend from secondary school and also a close friend of Arafat and Hussain. He had also volunteered at the IMA and kept stuff for Mohammed Patel after the latter left England. He got married in July 2004 and went on *umrah* with his in-laws in October. In 2005, he spent time with Islam and they attended Islamic lectures and took martial arts with Zaman. In January 2006, he gave Mohammed Patel's boxes to his son, Abdul Muneem, when lack of money forced him to move in with his in-laws. He grew a long beard and wore traditional Muslim clothes, but his in-laws did not approve of his new appearance and kicked the young couple out of their house. At the end of June 2006, three men attacked Savant, beat him up, and put chewing gun in his beard. To avoid further aggression, Savant shaved his beard and reverted back to Western appearance—hence Ali's e-mail reference to his change of look.⁷¹ It also made him blend into the crowd.

After getting Rauf's approval, Ali approached Savant, who claimed that the meeting happened in mid-July, but the fact that he reported his passport lost on 7 July seems to put the date 10 days earlier.⁷² According to Savant, Ali and he talked near a playing field in the early evening:

He began to speak about his first-hand experience in Pakistan, how he helped the refugees after the invasion of Afghanistan. He related to me as I had experience helping them in some way or form at the charity shop itself. He also was saying its futility, how he would help one or two people, but there's so many people behind in the line. He also spoke briefly about politics and how the voices of many people who marched upon London had fallen upon deaf ears against the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan. . . . Ahmed was basically defining the source of the problem and he was saying that basically it's got nothing to do with religion or Islamic fundamentalism or radicalization, but it's the foreign intervention of the U.S. and unfortunately the British.⁷³

Of course, Savant testified that Ali asked him to participate in a sham explosion, but the description of the recruitment pitch sounds right. Savant said that he agreed to participate partly because Waheed Zaman had done so.

Zaman was the last of the known suicide bombers. He was the pious mosque-goer in the vicinity of the IMA, who had met the volunteers in 2002. He was an avid soccer player and regularly played with Savant, who became a close friend. He later also befriended Islam, who joined their martial arts class. In October 2002, Zaman started biomedical studies at London Metropolitan University and was very active in venting his moral outrage at the illegal invasion of Iraq, the humiliation of Muslims in Abu Ghraib, and the raping of Iraqi women. In 2005, he was elected the president of his university Islamic Society. In July 2006, Zaman was again upset at the 2006 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the devastation it caused, comparing it to Iraq or Afghanistan. One evening, Ali and he went for a walk. Ali talked about the Western invasions of Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, and especially Lebanon and the Israeli use of British cluster bombs. Ali argued that all the political protests, petitions, and demonstrations did not work and asked Zaman to participate in the alleged sham bombing and propaganda videos. Zaman agreed, but wanted to write his own speech. Ali gave him some CDs to watch so he could study the words and manners of mujahedin. Despite his mediocre school record, Zaman was viewed as the intellectual of the group.⁷⁴

While waiting for Sarwar's return, Ali and Hussain bought some tools for the manufacture of their bombs on 6 July. A week later, they bought some glassware for their project and examined the seals and caps of soft

drink bottles at a Tesco.⁷⁵ Throughout the month, they were in constant telephone contact and often met with their fellow conspirators as well as other close friends,⁷⁶ who seemed aware that something important was going on—but including them in this narrative would needlessly complicate it without adding much to it. They all shared at the very least a great deal of sympathy for al Qaeda and Islamist radicalism as demonstrated by the books and tapes found at their respective homes when they were arrested.

On 8 July, Sarwar came back to England with his own set of notes: "Get block HP. Make 80 HP. Send K&S. Get more HP. Get Ace. Get hold of Nav . . . Jameel. Practice batteries. Invest in Bact. TH, Coryton. Fawley. Kingsbury and Haven. N. . . . Get hold CD changer. Get talks, Documentaries. Get hold Prices of phones. Practice notes bell. [e-mail addresses]. . . . Talc powder H. Moisturising cream AP, Lynx Spray AC, Brut Spray. Aftershave, all types, HP. Get GPS, CD changer, price list for phones." In a stunning violation of clandestine tradecraft, he wrote the meaning of the code words in the same notebook: "Talc powder: hex musk. Moisturising cream: AL. Aftershave HP. (Price is per cent). Lynx: acet, Brut: prop." He also wrote the formula for encoding numbers: "minus 2 from L4."⁷⁷

Sarwar's notes require some explanation because of their opacity. The 80 HP meant 80 percent hydrogen peroxide, Ace was accessories or laboratory equipment, and Nav or Jameel were code for Hussain and Rauf respectively. The rest is more obscure; as previously mentioned, Sarwar had acquired a hard drive with the diagrams of the gas and electricity grid for the major facilities in Britain. Since he was going to stay behind, he was to investigate large energy facilities: Bacton was the previously mentioned Belgium-UK gas pipeline terminal; TH was Telehouse; Coryton, an oil refinery; Fawley, another oil refinery; Kingsbury, a gas terminal; and Haven, Milford Haven, another oil refinery. They were possible targets after Overt. DC changer was a voice changer; talks, documentaries were the suicide videos; and prices were the percentage concentration of the hydrogen peroxide. Talc powder meant hexamine, moisturizing cream was aluminum powder, aftershave was hydrogen peroxide, Lynx was acetone (to make TATP if necessary), and Brut spray was propane gas.⁷⁸ The last item was to remind him to write down phone numbers in code by subtracting two from the last four digits of the number.

Sarwar e-mailed Rauf four days after his arrival: "no phone call from you yet. Are you OK. My number is. . . . Have you spoke with abdul yet. I

can send someone to abdul but you first need to speak to him and let him know that I need to get in touch with his friend." Abdul was probably Abdulla Ali, and the e-mail indicates that there had been difficulties with Rauf's ability to communicate with his operators in England. On 13 July, Rauf had tried to text Ali: "your friend can go for his rapping concert rehearsal. . . . Make sure he goes on the bus service which is most common over there." In other words, Rauf gave Umar Islam the green light to go on a trial run using an American carrier. The next day, Rauf finally got through to Ali, who still did not know that Sarwar was back: "I have been unable to get through to u so here is my no. and you can get in touch with me. . . . Also regarding your friend that is coming, can you get in touch with nabil and he can sort the rest." Nabil seems to be Sarwar, also known as "Nabs." Ali replied immediately, "my number does work but my phone was mashed up so it took a while to get a new one. But it should be ok now. Anyway ill call u soon. I cant get hold of nabz tell him to get in contact with me asap. Tell him to call me on the no I gave you. It should be ok now. Give me a email via nabeel to give to the camera dude . . . kid and tariq give their love." The two names referred to Khatib and Hussain respectively.⁷⁹

Sarwar and Ali finally made contact and met in Lloyd Park in Ali's neighborhood, lying on the grass, facing each other to make sure no one else could hear the conversation. Neither was forthcoming about the conversation at the trial. They must have updated each other on the new developments—directions and guidance from Rauf and Abu Ubaydah, new recruits as suicide bombers, their respective division of labor, Ali's imminent acquisition of a flat to build the devices, the concentration of hydrogen peroxide, the purchase of equipment and chemicals, and the making of the suicide videos. After the meeting, the two went to a restaurant and then to a mosque. They separated after about three hours together.⁸⁰

Except for Sarwar, who needed to stay away from them, the rest of the conspirators spent a lot of time together, playing soccer or tennis in the early evening. Ali and Hussain reported their passports lost.⁸¹ On 18 July, Ali notified Rauf, with whom he still had problems communicating: "there ar a few lads who wanno join up. We have about four lads."⁸² Now that all seven volunteers (Ali, Hussain, and Khatib as the original ones, plus Islam, Arafat, Savant, and Zaman) had agreed to be suicide bombers, their most pressing need was to have a locale to house their equipment, build the explosive devices, and record their wassiyas.

The Bomb Factory

The bomb factory came by way of Ali's older brothers. Dawood Khan owned a flat, which he had hoped to occupy with his family, but his wife did not like it. He sold it in early April 2006 for about £236,000 and turned the sum over to his brother Umar Khan, a part-time real estate developer, to invest it. Umar decided to buy a vacant repossession property and flip it for a profit after fixing, cleaning, and painting it. On 20 July, he bought one on Forest Road for £138,000 and gave the keys to Ali to fix, clean, paint, and decorate it before putting it back on the market.⁸³ This flat became the bomb factory for the next three weeks.

That afternoon, Ali went to the Spy Shop, an electronics store, to ask about intruder detection cameras but did not know what he wanted. He was advised to return after getting his exact requirements. The next day, Ali reported to Rauf that he finally had a place and at night he and Hussain brought some of their equipment there.⁸⁴

Meanwhile Sarwar was searching for the best prices on hydrogen peroxide at different concentrations and checked with Rauf, who was micromanaging these purchases from Pakistan. On 19 July, Rauf e-mailed specific guidance to Sarwar, who did some calling the next day and then advised Rauf of his results. Rauf agreed and Sarwar summed it up on the 22nd: "The following order should be ready for delivery by next Saturday: 40–100ml (CK ONE); 30–100ml (POLO SPORT); YES . . . BOTH AT £80."⁸⁵

Meanwhile, Gulzar called al Ghabra on July 20 on a number provided by Abdul Muneem. A little later, the teenager picked him up to see al Ghabra, who gave some money to the desperate Gulzar. When he returned home, his wife confronted him, accusing him of lying to her. Since they lived in a small cramped room in a stranger's flat, they went out to the park, where Gulzar confessed his real name and being wanted for murder. His wife reacted, "At that moment, I was scared and did not want to leave him. . . . I really love him and I just said that, you know, 'let's get out of the country' . . . if he's on the run, I run with him."⁸⁶ They decided to move into the living room of her aunt's flat for a few days before moving again into a small vacant flat given them by her aunt.

On 22 July, Ali bought six large glass jars at Tesco. Later at the mosque, Zaman handed him a prepared handwritten draft statement for his wassiya, which Ali took for review. The next day, Ali bought some more equipment at Tesco. In the early afternoon, he met with Sarwar again in a quiet section

of Lloyd Park for about half an hour. Sarwar was ready to buy hydrogen peroxide in large quantity but needed help to buy laboratory equipment. He asked Ali to buy syringes, measuring cylinders, conical flasks, and thermometers. Ali gave him money for the hydrogen peroxide and promised he would help with the rest of the purchases.⁸⁷

After Sarwar's departure, Ali met a friend and, as they talked on a bench, they believed they detected possible police surveillance. They spotted a man with sunglasses watching them. They stared at him for a moment and the man walked away. As they walked away, they turned back to see whether anyone followed them. Later that day, Ali told Hussain that he believed he was being followed, but Hussain replied that he was probably being paranoid. However, later in the evening, Ali believed a small car was following him as he was going home. He made a sudden turn and was followed by the small car. He then did a U-turn and noticed in his rearview mirror that the small car also did a U-turn, confirming his suspicion.⁸⁸

On 24 July, Ali alerted Rauf from an Internet café and his fellow conspirators by phone. In the afternoon, he met Hussain in a park to be able to talk securely.⁸⁹ Sarwar also e-mailed Rauf, "met cha cha [Ali] and said he got a wedding film that he needs to give me. Shall I take it off him?"⁹⁰

On 25 July, Rauf decided to use Gulzar as an adviser to Sarwar, who was having problems carrying out his mission. Rauf e-mailed Sarwar, "my friend that would like to see you is arif. You have met him before. He is good friends with abdil and jameel so you don't need to worry bout that he can help them. He knows about the dates and he knows his aftershaves very well as he had a cosmetic shop before. But because his shop was bankrupt he is a bit out of touch about the new desighber aftersahvees [*sic*]. So you could update him about the ones you were shown by me it would be helpful cos h [*sic*] needs to show Jameel afterwards." In response to Sarwar's question the previous day, he replied, "take cha cha wedding film off him. Also can you show Arif how to make a film cos he is not very good and he wants to make one for his sisters wedding."⁹¹ Later that day, Sarwar drove back to the pharmacy in south Wales to buy 20 half-liter bottles of 35 percent hydrogen peroxide for £343. He then drove to Bristol to a hydroponics shop to buy two five-liter containers of 17.5 percent hydrogen peroxide for £80.⁹² The same day, both Ali and Hussain telephoned the passport office to expedite their passport applications. They were given fast-track appointments in person for 2 August in the early afternoon. Ali also called the Barclays Bank Career Development Loans Department for an

application. He later met with Umar Islam at his home and then played tennis with Hussain. Afterward, Hussain bought several Oasis and Lucozade soft drinks at Tesco.⁹³

On 26 July, Sarwar poured the 20 liters of hydrogen peroxide into four five-liter bottles of emptied mineral water, placed them in black bin liners, and the next day hid them in an isolated spot in Fennel's Wood, not too far from his home. Ali returned to the bomb factory with two large heavy bags. He dispatched Arafat to John Bell & Croyden in the West End to pick up needed medical supplies, including glass cylinders, beakers, measuring cups, syringes, and needles. Hussain bought large surgical needles at several pharmacies while Ali bought a satellite navigation system.⁹⁴

The Martyrdom Videos

On 27 July, Ali and Hussain bought more supplies, including a glass jar, and went to a hardware store, where they examined tools, utensils, jars, flashlights, screwdrivers, batteries, and electrically operated toothbrushes. They bought two disposable cameras, felt protector pads, and bum-bags. They then picked up Savant in late afternoon and drove to the bomb factory.⁹⁵ They spent some time there and recorded their respective wassiyas with a Sony 8mm videocassette camera.

In his wassiya, Ali explained that he was becoming a martyr for entrance to Jannah [paradise] and "to punish and to humiliate the *kuffar* [non-believer], to teach them a lesson that they will never forget. It's to tell them that we Muslim people have pride . . . we are brave. We're not cowards. Enough is enough. We've warned you so many times get out of our lands, leave us alone, but you have persisted in trying to humiliate us, kill us and destroy us. Sheikh Osama warned you many times to leave our lands or you will be destroyed." An off-camera voice asked him, "What about innocent people? Surely, just because the *kuffar* kill our innocent does not mean that we should . . . kill theirs?" Ali replied, "You show more care and concern for animals than you do for the Muslim ummah. . . . I have the desire since the age of 15/16 to participate in jihad in the path of Allah. I had the desire since then to punish the *kuffar* for the evil they are doing. . . . Leave us alone. Stop meddling in our affairs and we will leave you alone. Otherwise expect floods of martyr operations against you and we will take our revenge and anger."⁹⁶

Hussain lectured, "We're not targeting innocent civilians. We're targeting economic . . . and military targets. They're the battlegrounds of today

. . . and collateral damage is going to be inevitable and people are going to die. . . . For many years . . . I dreamt of doing this, but I didn't have no chance of doing this. . . . I only wish I could do this . . . again and again until people come to their senses and realize . . . don't mess with the Muslims. Stop supporting the puppets and helping our enemies. If you do this, we're going to leave you alone. If you don't, you're going to feel the wrath of the mujahedin, Inshallah."⁹⁷

Savant stressed similar points:

As for the lovers of life and haters of death, you will class my case as a case of suicide. I say, argue your case with the Most High, and as he has said, and never think [of] those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead, rather they are alive with their Lord. . . . Muslims . . . remove yourself from the grasp of the *kuffar* before you are counted as one of them. Do not be content with your council houses and businesses and Western lifestyles. So, we also say that if you are among the polytheists whilst they are attacked, we are free from you whatever may befall you. . . . Obviously after this beautiful operation they will accuse us brothers of all sorts of things and most of the things they will accuse us of is killing for the sake of killing, hating freedom, hating the West, being fed up with our lives.⁹⁸

Late that evening, Ali met Sarwar, gave him the laboratory equipment he and Arafat had bought, and alerted him about possible police surveillance. Sarwar was skeptical and Ali tried to prove it to him by driving around and going to an isolated lane in a graveyard to see whether anyone was following. No car came and Sarwar told him he was paranoid.⁹⁹

On 28 July, Sarwar made about 84 calls to hydroponics companies. In the evening, Ali and Zaman went to the bomb factory where Zaman recorded a suicide video. Arafat Khan joined them shortly thereafter.¹⁰⁰ Zaman declared,

I could have lived a life of ease but instead chose to fight for the sake of Allah's *deen*. . . . All of you so-called moderate Muslims, there's only one way in which to solve this crisis, the problems will not be solved by means of campaigning, big conferences, peaceful negotiations with the disbelievers. The only solution . . . is by fighting jihad . . . until the enemy is fully subdued and expelled from our

lands. America and England have no cause for complaint for they are the ones who invaded and built bases in the land of the Muslims. They are the ones who supply weapons to the enemies of Islam, including the accursed Israelis. I'm warning these two nations and any other country who seeks a bad end, death and destruction will pass upon you like a tornado and you will not feel . . . any security or peace in your lands until you [stop] interfering in the affairs of the Muslim completely. . . . Remember, as you kill us, you will be killed and as you bomb us, you will be bombed. . . . I have not been brainwashed. I have been educated to a high standard. I am old enough to make my own decisions.¹⁰¹

Arafat recorded his video after Zaman's departure. Apparently, Ali must have felt that Arafat's effort was inadequate and he asked him to do it again at a later time.

On 29 July, Sarwar drove to meet Gulzar near his flat. They went to an Internet café, where Sarwar e-mailed Rauf, "I am with arif, didn't thought it would be him. Top dude!" Sarwar then drove Gulzar to another part of London, where they entered adjacent telephone kiosks to make calls—Sarwar's call was to Ali. After prayer at a mosque and lunch at a pizza restaurant, they went to a park for a secure talk before Sarwar drove Gulzar back home.¹⁰² Neither one was forthcoming in their respective testimonies as to the nature of this three-hour meeting. After the meeting, Gulzar delayed his departure for South Africa, probably to help Sarwar in manufacturing the explosive charges.

After the meeting, Sarwar drove to Walthamstow for a quick talk with Ali in his car. He informed Ali about Gulzar's unexpected arrival and Ali probably advised him to hide any compromising material in his possession for security reasons. They went to an Internet café to create new e-mail accounts to communicate with each other. Sarwar then dropped Ali off before returning to High Wycombe. Ali, Hussain, and Arafat played tennis together that evening.¹⁰³

On 30 July, Ali further increased his security precautions. He bought four new cell phones, each dedicated to specific groups of people. One was to call Rauf and another for Sarwar. A third phone was to call Hussain, Savant, Khatib, and other friends. The last phone was used just to receive calls and texts but not to make any outgoing calls.¹⁰⁴ Sarwar surveyed another wooded area near his home for hiding the compromising material

in his possession. He continued to look for more laboratory equipment and kept in telephone and Internet contact with Ali, Rauf, and Gulzar.

In the afternoon, Ali and Arafat, carrying heavy bags, went to the bomb factory, where Arafat recorded his second wassiya, in which he berated "the bootlickers who stand shoulder to shoulder with kuffars in condemning these beautiful operations and the mujahedin. In particular, I'd like to address the scholars to whom Allah has given knowledge which they concealed . . . to please the kuffar, to save themselves from their disapproval. What a miserable deal! Pleasing the kuffar all, while just pleasing Allah; fearing them instead of fearing Allah."¹⁰⁵

In the evening, when Ali, Hussain, Arafat, and Savant played tennis and went to dinner together, MI5 surreptitiously broke into the bomb factory and planted a listening device in it.¹⁰⁶

Conversation at the Bomb Factory

On 31 July, Rauf sent an e-mail to Ali inquiring about the surveillance, "How is the skin infection you were telling me about? Has it got worse or is the cream working?"¹⁰⁷ Savant set up an appointment for a fast-track passport application for 9 August.

In the morning, Sarwar bought a thermometer, three subminiature halogen bulbs, and some battery clamps at one store; a 30-inch expandable trolley suitcase at another; and a spade at another. He made phone calls from a nearby kiosk and later walked in King's Wood carrying a bulky green plastic bag. He emerged half an hour later without the bag and drove home. He later testified that he marked a tree to identify a spot to bury the suitcase of the compromising laboratory equipment.¹⁰⁸

In later afternoon, Ali and Hussain came to the bomb factory with some supplies and worked on the small batteries to make detonators. Hussain said, "Yeah, that's good. Are you sure? That's boom, that's boom, mate." Ali replied, "We've got our virgins." They worked on the soft drink plastic bottles and one of them said, "take the juice out." They went on to discuss the number of bombers. Hussain said there were six, but Ali corrected him, "seven." Hussain listed them, "one, two, Adam, Ibo, Arrow, Omar B, Waheed" (Ali, Hussain, Khatib, Savant, Arafat, Islam, Zaman). They talked about another group that might have five bombers. While drilling a hole in a plastic bottle, Ali said, "We can't all take the exact same thing. . . . It will be different terminals. . . . No-one's going to get the same," referring to

different soft drinks and flavors at different airline terminals. After draining a bottle of its content, Hussain said, "It's ready, waiting for the HP." Ali responded, "He's got to boil it down . . . enough for this mission." They discussed the targeting of the operation. One said, "You need sound places like New York, Washington, D.C., California, Miami, Philadelphia. . . . Find out from a travel agent the ten most popular places where British . . . people [are] going." They rehearsed what they would say at airport security when asked who they would be visiting. They'd reply that they were single, visiting a girlfriend and mention they had a condom in their bag. Finally, they concluded, "Batteries are done, bulbs are done." They left the bomb factory after four hours, carrying three plastic bags. Along the way, Ali dropped one bag into a rubbish bin and put the other two in the trunk of his car. Police officers fished the discarded bag from the rubbish and noted that it contained two empty Lucozade bottles and one empty Oasis bottle and latex gloves with black substance from the batteries on them.¹⁰⁹

On 1 August, around 4 or 5 AM, before surveillance came to his home, Sarwar went into King's Wood with his spade to dig a hole and hide the new suitcase filled with laboratory equipment. The ground was too hard for him to dig. After half an hour, he abandoned the effort, leaving his spade behind. He returned home to take a nap. In late morning, he went to the post office and mail-ordered measuring cylinders, a glass beaker, and a flask from a wine store in Devon. He bought small boxes of citric acid (the catalyst for HMTD) at three different pharmacies, a box of 50 latex gloves, and a bag of "Homebase Easy Dig Soil Cultivator," which he had learned about on the Internet earlier that day. In early afternoon, he went to an Internet café to open up a new account from notes he pulled out of his pocket. After lunch, he called Ali and Gulzar respectively from adjacent telephone kiosks. Ali spent the day with his family at a shopping center. Hussain applied for an additional £8,000 loan. In the evening, Ali socialized with Arafat and Zaman.¹¹⁰

On 2 August, again before surveillance arrived in the morning, Sarwar returned to King's Wood. He poured his soil cultivator and water on the soil, but it stayed hard. He gave up, returned home, and went back to sleep. After he woke up, he tried to contact Ali from various public phone booths, punctuated with calls to Rauf and Gulzar. In the afternoon, he went to King's Wood and left a small package. Since he could not dig a hole, he looked for an alternative place to hide the suitcase. He came across a fallen tree with a large cavity at its base, where he could hide the suitcase. He

marked the spot and left.¹¹¹ Meanwhile, Ali and Hussain went to their interviews at the passport office in central London. Barclays Bank notified Savant of its approval of his application for a £10,000 loan for the purchase of a car. In the evening, Ali and Hussain played tennis with some of their friends.¹¹²

The next day was a very busy day. In the early morning, Sarwar hid the suitcase in the identified tree in King's Wood without being detected. Ali e-mailed Rauf from an Internet café, "Listen, it's confirmed, I have fever. Sometimes when I go out in the sun to meet people, I feel hot. . . . By the way I set up my music shop now. I only need to sort out the opening time. I need stock."¹¹³ So despite detecting surveillance, Ali informed Rauf that he had set up the bomb factory and was waiting for the explosive charge from Sarwar.

Sarwar called Gulzar, bought Oasis and Lucozade soft drinks, and drove to Gulzar's flat. He went in with two bags, including the soft drinks, and came out two hours later with just one. Sarwar later testified that he had brought Gulzar a home-cooked meal for lunch, but surveillance saw him going to a restaurant for a meal right after leaving Gulzar. The prosecutor, and I agree, suggested instead that Sarwar met with Gulzar to demonstrate the latest in the construction of the explosive devices because, though Gulzar was an explosive expert, he was not familiar with Abu Ubaydah's new design. After their session, Sarwar took away the compromising bomb-making material. Afterward, Gulzar called South Africa from a public phone booth.¹¹⁴

That afternoon, Ali and Hussain went to the bomb factory for five and a half hours to work on their devices. They drilled holes in the bottles. The radio was on, making it very difficult for the listening device to pick up their conversation. Some of the shreds of conversation revealed discussion about the possibility of taking camera or camcorder batteries on the plane and exploration of pretexts to go to the toilet with a toilet bag. They left in the evening with Ali carrying an electric drill set in a black plastic bag. They allegedly went to an isolated graveyard area to check if anyone was following them. They saw someone there and there was no reason for him to be there. "After that, I thought, 'I'm finished,'" Hussain said at trial. "I didn't do anything regarding making the device or anything after that. I stopped." This excursion to a graveyard is not documented in the surveillance record and may not be true.¹¹⁵

On 4 August, Ali went to an Internet café to check for Rauf's response.¹¹⁶ Rauf first inquired about the wassiyas: "Regarding the camera

dude why are u still seeing him???? Pass him on to nabs.” Rauf then asked for details about the surveillance to brief Abu Ubaydah and decide whether to abort the mission. “Your skin infection is contagious dont it spreading. By the way how bad is it do u always gt it when you go out or is it only sometimes??? I need as much details as possible so my friend the skin specialst (paps) can help. Do u think u can still open the shop with this skin problem?? Is it minor??? Or do u think u can still sort an opening time without the skin problem worsening?????” Rauf asked whether Umar Islam had already gone through with his rehearsal flight: “has kala done his rapp show?????” He also proposed a change of communication: instead of e-mail, “pls reply to my queries by text msg.” As an afterthought, he asked, “PS. Have any of the shop assistants with u also got this infection?????”¹¹⁷ Ali then drove to Slough to meet with Sarwar. After lunch at a restaurant, they exchanged bags at Ali’s car. Ali gave Sarwar modified light bulbs in a glass jar and a videotape of wassiyas, which Sarwar hid in the family garage.

In the evening, Ali, Hussain, Arafat, and a friend played tennis. Sarwar called Rauf from a kiosk. Gulzar went to an Internet café, where he allegedly tried to download software to fix his laptop, and called Rauf and Sarwar from a public phone.¹¹⁸ He then allegedly went to al Ghabra’s place, but surveillance failed to pick this up. Gulzar testified that he brought his laptop to see what could be done to fix it. Al Ghabra allegedly gave him a USB stick and a CD that turned out to contain radical material. Gulzar explained that he had no television and wanted some entertainment or educational material for his wife. He said he could not access the CD since his computer had problems. He later returned to an Internet café and tried to download some software to fix his computer.¹¹⁹

It seems that the conspirators lay low on 5 August. They were in contact with each other, calling each other from phone booths and checking Internet cafés. Sarwar looked at ads for places to rent in a shop window. In the evening, Ali, Hussain, Arafat, and a friend again played tennis.¹²⁰

Choosing the Airline Flights

In the late morning of 6 August, Ali e-mailed Rauf from an Internet café that the surveillance was not so bad. “Its not all the time its here and there usually when I link someone by my self. I aint nothing for a while now. Ill still open shop. I dont think its so bad that I cant do work but if I feel really

ill let u know. Make isti and ask paps to make isti too. . . . Of course I dont link anyone new.” He would help Sarwar find a place to concentrate the hydrogen peroxide. “Im trying to sort nabs out wid a yard.” He would transfer a second wassiya videotape to him. “I also have to arrange for the printers to be picked up and stored, let me do this then ill take a back sit.” He had been out of touch with Umar Islam for a week and had not yet recorded his wassiya. “Im still waiting for kala to link me and do his rap song. Everyday I send a msg to him, he is late by 7 days.” Ali was now ready to work out the schedule of the flights to be blown up over the Atlantic. “I have done my prep all I have to do now is sort out opening time take and bookings. That should take a couple of days.”¹²¹ After sending this e-mail, Ali waited for a short time. He received a call on his cell phone and was heard speaking in hushed tones in a foreign language for about a minute. Presumably, Rauf gave him the go-ahead.¹²²

Ali then logged on to the Heathrow Airport website, which showed a timetable, and then accessed a flight booking service website.¹²³ He downloaded the information on a memory stick. The stick was later found at his place; the content listed a series of planes leaving from Heathrow Airport for North America:

1415 UA 931 LHR–San Francisco (United Airlines)
 1500 AC 849 LHR–Toronto (Air Canada)
 1515 AC 865 LHR–Montreal (Air Canada)
 1540 UA 959 LHR–Chicago (United Airlines)
 1620 UA 925 LHR–Washington (United Airlines)
 1635 AA 131 LHR–New York (American Airlines)
 1650 AA 091 LHR–Chicago (American Airlines)¹²⁴

At the same time, Sarwar was at another Internet café looking at hydroponics websites and stores that sold them. He left the café after five minutes and called Ali from a public phone booth. Ali, still searching for flights at his café, answered in a loud voice, telling him, “well, then, take them out of the boxes. . . . Let me know about the weight.” After this brief conversation, Ali resumed his search and left the Internet café after more than two hours.¹²⁵ Gulzar and Sarwar called each other and Pakistan. After talking to Pakistan and al Ghabra, Gulzar called Sarwar back and, according to a surveillance officer nearby, told him, “I’ve been meaning to speak to you. There’s something I’ve forgotten. I definitely need it to be 8 millimeters.

Can you get someone else to do it?"¹²⁶ One can only surmise that he was speaking of the wassiya videotapes.

That evening, Gulzar took a bus and Sarwar drove to Walthamstow. Ali picked them up in his car around 10 PM, parked for a while, and then went to a restaurant, with Gulzar carrying a heavy bag, the size of a laundry bag. This 45-minute meeting was the only time that the three of them met in person. Gulzar left first to call al Ghabra from a nearby public phone booth. Half an hour later, Ali dropped off Sarwar at his car and Sarwar returned home.¹²⁷ Gulzar went to al Ghabra's home to give al Ghabra the bag that he had received from Ali. Since al Ghabra's home was not searched during the wave of arrests, its content is not known. Gulzar said it was electronic equipment—a couple of iPods, a camcorder, a satellite navigation system, 36 unused Pakistani AA batteries, and some flashlights—for al Ghabra to sell on his behalf because he needed money, but the government believes it also contained a set of the wassiyas for Pakistan.¹²⁸

Final Developments

On 7 August (Monday), Sarwar was in frequent phone contact with Ali and Gulzar. In early afternoon, he e-mailed Rauf from an Internet café, "I have sent you some new business files, and some new movies and music. You should receive them tomorrow. It should be with yaq's friend."¹²⁹ The prosecution argued that Yaq stood for Mohammed Yasar Gulzar and his friend was al Ghabra. Sarwar then an e-mail to Ali. "Hiya, my friend's uncle will be going abroad on Monday morning so I will need the film by Sunday afternoon at the latest. You still haven't gotten back to me about the yard that I need. . . . Joseph had a go at me because I haven't sorted out my things." Apparently, Rauf was upset with Sarwar because his inability to rent a place to concentrate the hydrogen peroxide was delaying the operation. Ali answered, "Okay, I'm on the case. Today I am seeing the house. The guy was unable to show it to me today." Sarwar then referred to Rauf, "I don't know why he's taking the piss. . . . I got some stuff to send with your mate so make sure we link up before that." After his e-mail session, Sarwar bought some Superglue and an expandable garden rake. Ali later texted Rauf while Gulzar called al Ghabra and Abdul Muneem from different adjacent phone booths.¹³⁰ In late evening, Gulzar made a call to someone called "Izzy" (Ismael) up north.¹³¹

The next day, Ali called Rauf. The conspirators called each other from various phone booths, and Ali finally connected with Umar Islam, who had

been very busy at work in the previous two weeks, during which time Ali had changed his phone number. Savant made another loan application for £10,000 for the purchase of a car but it was later rejected.¹³²

On the morning of 9 August, Ali and Rauf exchanged texts and Ali went to an Internet café. Gulzar took his wife to London City Airport. She flew to Brussels to see her daughters and start the registration process for her new husband. Gulzar returned home by bus. Savant kept his midday appointment for his application at the London Passport Office. Sarwar went to a local Asda store and bought five two-liter bottles of water and two one-liter bottles of Asda high juice, which he paid in cash. As he had forgotten his cell phone at home, he called several hydroponic companies from public telephones. He then bought four five-liter containers of 17.5 percent hydrogen peroxide at two stores. He returned home in late afternoon, where he found some text messages waiting for him on his cell phone.¹³³

In the afternoon, Gulzar had tried to contact Sarwar no less than six times. Somewhat desperate, he called Rauf in Pakistan, who immediately called Sarwar, but without success. Gulzar continued to try to contact Sarwar and again Rauf. He also called Abdul Muneem, allegedly to ask him for money. Finally, when Sarwar turned his phone back on, he saw that he had missed a call from Rauf. He immediately called Rauf's cell phone and shortly thereafter got a text from him: "Yaq says switch your phone on. I've left you mail. I don't know of leather belts." Sarwar called Gulzar.¹³⁴

Rauf was arrested in Pakistan shortly after this last text. He lived in Bahawalpur with his family and that evening he boarded the bus to Multan. ISID officers pulled the bus over and arrested him. The decision to arrest him has never been officially explained. Informally British officers accused U.S. authorities of putting pressure on the ISID to arrest Rauf as soon as possible for fear that he might disappear once he reached Multan. According to his report, Rauf usually took the precaution of going to an area in the FATA where he felt safe from arrest when operations were under way as he had done for the London bombings.¹³⁵ This precipitated the wave of arrests in England, lest the conspirators destroy the evidence of their impending crime. Pakistan is five hours ahead of England.

Unaware of the events unfolding in Pakistan, Ali and Islam entered the bomb factory around 6 PM and Islam recorded his carefully written out wassiya.¹³⁶

This is an obligation on me as a Muslim to wage jihad against the kuffar. We are doing this in order to gain the pleasure of our Lord.

... This is revenge for the actions of the USA in the Muslim lands and their accomplices such as the British and the Jews. . . . Martyrdom operations upon martyrdom operations will keep on raining on these kuffars until they . . . leave our lands. . . . We don't mind that, if you call us terrorists, because we will keep on terrorizing you until you learn your lesson. We love to die in the path of Allah. We love to die like you love life, so you cannot win. How can you fight against people who . . . find it an act of worship to fight against you?¹³⁷

Off camera, a voice asked him about the kuffar, who "accuse us of being barbarians, accuse us of killing for the sake of killing. . . . What do you say about those who will be killed who the kuffar will call innocent civilians?" Islam replied, "As you [disbelievers] bomb, you will be bombed, and as you kill, you will be killed, and if you want to kill our women and children, then the same thing will happen to you. This is not a joke. If you think you can go into our lands and do what you're doing in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and keep on supporting those who are fighting against the Muslims and think it will not come back on to your own doorstep, may you have another think coming. . . . The sons of Islam will take revenge for what you have done to us." People who paid taxes to fund an army that pillaged Muslim lands from their resources and dishonored Muslims were not innocent. "Even if you disagree that you've done nothing, you're just sitting there and you're still funding the army. You haven't put down your leader. You haven't pressured them enough."¹³⁸

After recording the tape, Islam asked Ali whether it would be better for his wife to go to Sri Lanka, where he knew someone, before or after the operation. Ali suggested she should go after because if she went before people might suspect that she knew about the operation beforehand. Islam then confessed to Ali that his wife had discovered his handwritten martyrdom script when it fell out of his pocket. She confronted him, "Is that what I think it is?" Islam relied, "Don't ask no question." Ali responded, "that's a serious lapse man. I told you to do it on the laptop, didn't I? . . . Put it in a hidden folder." Islam asked Ali how much time they had before going on the operation. Ali replied, "A couple of weeks." Islam said that he still had not been to the passport office to replace his faulty passport (with the wrong birthdate on it) and Ali urged him, "You'd better go, man." Islam agreed, "I'm going to go there in a day . . . and then book a trip." Ali

explained to Islam that he had changed his phone number because "I felt some heat." Islam then told Ali that his wife was considering accompanying him on his suicide operation. Ali asked what she was going to do with their baby (she was also pregnant at the time). Islam answered, "Well, . . . obviously she's got the baby but that's all—I think, say, that she knew someone was going to be there to look after them." Ali suggested, "Maybe, she'd take them with her." Islam said, "Maybe, you know what I mean. She'd like to do it though." Islam then asked about how to assemble the bomb on the plane. When Ali told him, he said, "This is really going to happen, isn't it?" They then returned to the issue of his wife and baby coming along. Ali told him, "I know my wife wouldn't agree to it."¹³⁹ Ali and Islam left the bomb factory after an hour. Ali carried two plastic bags, one full and the other half-empty, and dropped off Islam at a bus stop.

The Arrests

Ali and Sarwar called each other from phone booths and determined to meet that evening at the Waltham Forest town hall. Sarwar arrived first and parked in the visitor parking lot. Ali arrived around 9:30 PM and carefully looped around the lot and hall. Sarwar saw him and followed him in his car. They parked in front of the town hall. Ali handed Sarwar the half-empty bag, which contained Arafat's second recording and Islam's wassiyas, the video camera, and batteries. Sarwar put them in the trunk of his car, and the two sat side by side along the wall of the town hall, where the police arrested them at 9:43 PM.¹⁴⁰

This triggered a wave of 22 additional arrests, including Cossor Ali, Tanvir Hussain, Umar Islam, Arafat Khan, Ibrahim Savant, Waheed Zaman, Adam Khatib, Mohammed Gulzar, and Abdul Muneem Patel. According to Rauf, two other potential martyrs were not arrested because his contact, presumably Gulzar, had not yet reached them.¹⁴¹ One of them, "Ismael," whom Gulzar had called again the evening of his arrest, has since been identified. Allegedly, Gulzar was getting ready to meet him the next day, brief him on the plot, and film his wassiya.¹⁴²

The arrests in Britain were premature. Ali's estimate that the operation would take place in "two weeks" was wishful thinking. Sarwar had not yet started concentrating hydrogen peroxide and we saw from the previous attacks that it was the most time-consuming part of the plot. In fact, he had not yet found a place that he could use as a bomb factory. Al Qaeda,

in the person of Rauf, was in constant contact with the field leaders in England: Ali, Sarwar, and Gulzar. Rauf used e-mails, texts, and voice calls. He liked e-mail and Yahoo messaging with Ali, phone calls with Sarwar, and phone voice and text with Gulzar. Sarwar used five cell phones and Gulzar and Ali four each. Hussain, Ali's lieutenant in touch with the other martyr volunteers, had six phones. The cell phones were dedicated for calling only one person. The cell phones were mostly prepaid phones, not requiring registration. All of them also used prepaid telephone cards, which they used from public telephones.¹⁴³

The Crown Prosecution Service charged Ahmed Ali, Assad Sarwar, and Tanvir Hussain with conspiracy to cause explosions. It also charged them and Umar Islam, Ibrahim Savant, Arafat Khan, and Waheed Zaman with conspiracy to commit public nuisance. It charged these seven and Mohammed Gulzar with conspiracy to murder persons unknown and conspiracy to murder using explosives on aircraft. It also charged Adam Khatib with conspiracy to murder persons unknown and Abdul Muneem Patel with possession of a document or record containing information of a kind likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing an act of terrorism. Cossor Ali was charged with having information which might be of material assistance in preventing the commission by another person of an act of terrorism and not disclosing that information as soon as reasonably possible. Rashid Rauf was held on a British warrant related to the 2002 murder of his uncle. He was also brought on terrorism charges in connection with the British plot, but on 13 December 2006, a judge in Rawalpindi dismissed the terrorism charges as lying outside the court's jurisdiction.

Abdul Muneem Patel and Cossor Ali were released on bail. A year later, the mysterious Ismael, or AM, from Birmingham, was put under control orders.¹⁴⁴ Abdul Muneem Patel was the first to be tried in September 2007. He was only convicted of collecting information for a terrorist purpose and sentenced to six months in a young offenders institute on 26 October 2007.

In December 2007, Rashid Rauf managed to escape from detention during a return trip from a court hearing back to jail. Abu Ubaydah al-Masri, the alleged mastermind behind the plot, died of hepatitis in the FATA in the winter of 2008.

On 3 April 2008, Ali, Sarwar, Hussain, Islam, Savant, Arafat, Zaman, and Gulzar went on trial at Woolwich Crown Court. On 9 July, Ali, Sarwar, and Hussain pled guilty to the charge of conspiracy to cause explosions. On 10 July, these three and Islam, Savant, Arafat, and Zaman pled guilty to

conspiracy to commit a public nuisance. On 8 September 2008, a jury found Ali, Sarwar, and Hussain guilty of conspiracy to murder persons unknown, but could reach no verdict on the other charge and on the other defendants. It found Gulzar not guilty of all the charges. Gulzar was immediately put under control order in connection with these charges.¹⁴⁵ The Crown Prosecution Service decided to retry the other seven defendants on the still outstanding charges.

Rashid Rauf was killed by a Predator missile in Ali Khel, North Waziristan, on 22 November 2008.

The retrial started on 2 March 2009. On 9 September 2009, Ali, Sarwar, and Hussain were convicted of the charge of conspiracy to murder using explosives on aircraft. Islam was found guilty of conspiracy to murder persons unknown, but, along with Savant, Arafat, and Zaman, was found not guilty of conspiracy to murder using explosives on aircraft. The jury was deadlocked for Savant, Arafat, and Zaman on the charge of conspiracy to murder persons unknown. Ali, Sarwar, Hussain, and Islam were sentenced to life in prison, with minimum terms of 40 years, 36 years, 32 years, and 22 years respectively. The Crown Prosecution Service decided to retry Savant, Arafat, and Zaman for a third time.

Adam Khatib and two others were tried at Woolwich Crown Court on 6 October 2009. They were convicted of their respective charges on 9 December 2009 and Khatib was sentenced to life in prison, with a minimum term of 18 years. Cossor Ali went on trial at the Inner London Crown Court in February 2010, but on 5 March 2010, a jury found her not guilty of the charge.

The third trial of Savant, Arafat, and Zaman on the sole charge of conspiracy to murder persons unknown started on 26 April 2010 at Woolwich Crown Court. On 8 July 2010, a jury convicted all three of the defendants. On 15 July 2010, they were all sentenced to life in prison, with a minimum term of 20 years.